

NENNIO,

Or

A Treatise of Nobility:

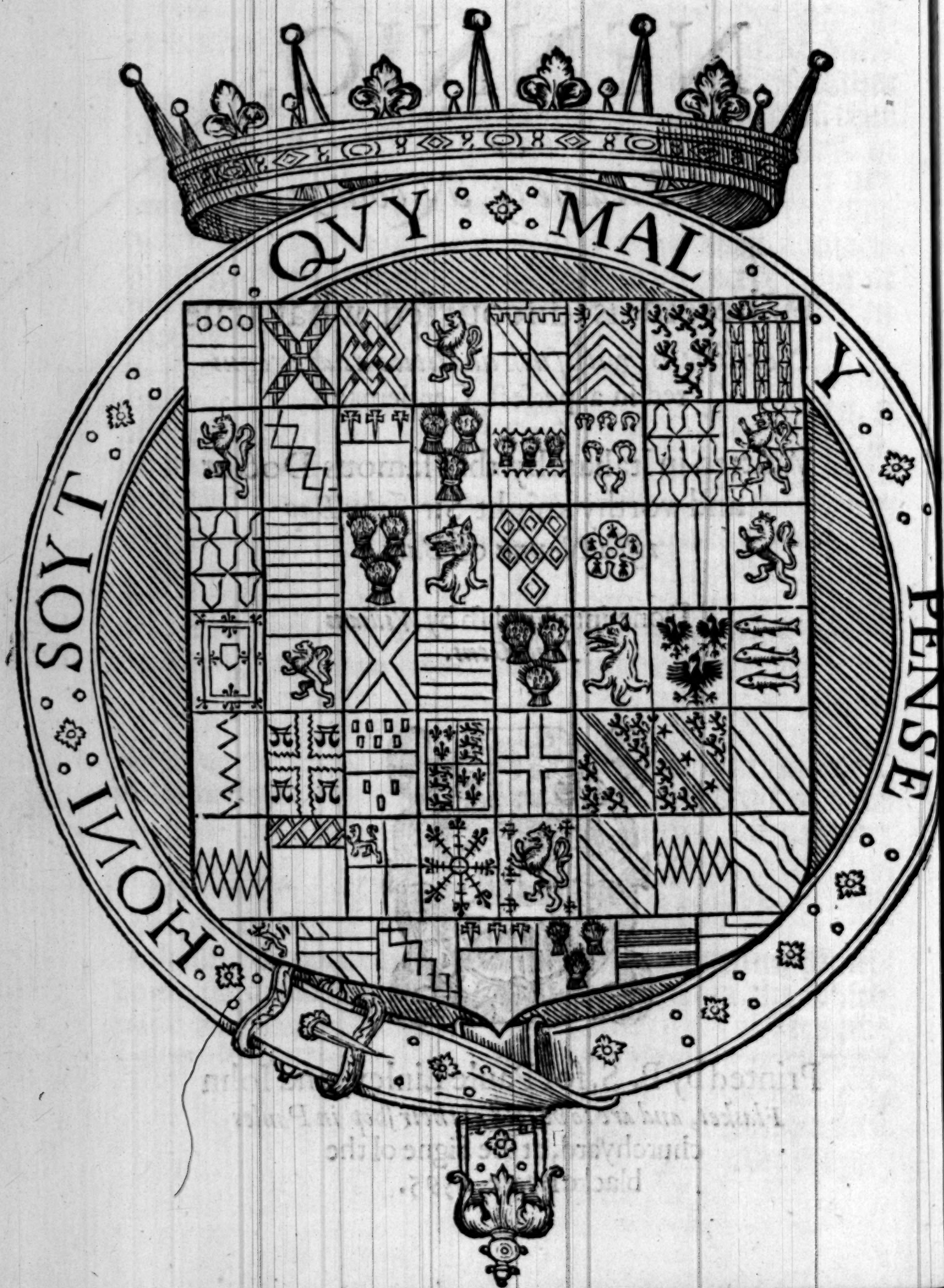
Wherein is discoursed what true
Nobilitie is, with such qualities as are requi-
red in a perfect Gentleman.

Written in Italian by that famous Doctor
and worthy knight Sir *John Bap-*
tista Nenna of Bari.

Done into English by *William*
Jones Gent.



Printed by P. S. for Paule Linley, and Iohn
Flasket, and are to be sold at their shop in Paules
churchyard, at the Signe of the
blacke Beare, 1595.



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE *Robert D'evreux*, Earle of Essex,
and Ewe, Vicount of Hereford, Lord Fer-
rer of Chartley, Bourcher, and Louaine, Mai-
ster of the *Queenes Maiesties horse*, knight of the
noble order of the garter, and one of hir
Highnesse most honourable
priuie Councell.



R ight Honorable, your good L. Ho-
nourable fauors many waies exten-
ded vnto me, haue bound me in a
bond of dutie, & seruice vnto your
L. Which albeit I am vnable to dis-
charge, yet am I in good hope your L. will accept
of these fruits of my labors for interest, without any
further claime, vntill I shall be inabled to make bet-
ter satisfaction. This work I now present, can hard-
ly acquite my promise, though it may well testifie
my loue, and in some sort represent your L. per-
fections. A more fit Patron I could not wel chuse,
considering the argument, and substance of the dis-
course. It treateth of Nobilitie by descent: The
ancient Noble house, your L. is come of, and how
both they and your L. haue deserued well of the
Crowne, and State, is well knowne to all men:
It speaketh of Nobilitie, purchased by vertue: Your
L. perfections can well witnesse, that your deme-
rites,

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

rites, haue added such grace to your Nobilitie, that not only the common sort do admire, but the court likewise and the chiefest glory thereof, doe testifie, that both these conioyned together in your L. doe make you perfectly Noble. But if your H. would behold a truer *Idea* of right, & accomplished Nobility, then this Author writeth of, your L. need but as in a glasse to view your selfe, and thereby to set downe what you see in your selfe. Which if I should vndertake but to aime at, I should shoot farre beyond my reach, & therefore will with wonder cease, and humble beseech your good L. that as your honorable curtesie to all men hath deserued no small commendation: So your Noble & worthy mind, wuld vouchsafe the patronage of these my labors. For the which I shall dailie pray vnto the almighty, to increase those gifts in your L. which doe make you worthy of the Noble house you are descended of, and that you may long liue as an ornament thereof, to the comfort of your Countrie, and friends. And so I most humble take my leaue of your good L. At my house by Charing Crosse, this first of Nouem. 1595.

Most humble at your L. commandement

William Iones.



To the courteous Reader.

Gentle Reader, As there is nothing so certaine then that all the races and families in the world, are issued and extracted from one Stocke: So there is nothing so incertaine and difficult, as to learne by what degrees, these families descended, and sprung from thistheir first root, are distinguished, because that all particular matters, which haue happened in the worlde, haue not beene committed to memorie: And the most part of those which haue beene left vnto vs, are either perished by the iniurie of time, or else it hath not pleased God to continue the remembrance of them, thereby to tame and bridle the curiositie and ambition of men, and to teach them to know that they are nothing, and come of nothing, (in regard wherof they haue smal reason to bragge so much of their Nobility:) as also to shew, that when it pleaseth him, he can and doth bring to ruine, the most Honourable families in the world, and make them abiect and contemptible, (especially when they fall into contempt of him) and aduance men of low & base estate to high Nobilitie: and set vp those whome hee hath pulled downe, as well to checke their pride, as for other particular causes, which doe spring from the depth of his owne diuine prouidence.

To the Reader.

In regard whereof the ancient noble men of Rome, did weare vpon their shooes little Moones, that they might alwaies beare in minde, the instabilitie of the honour of this world, which changeth like vnto the Moone. Which notwithstanding, this ticklish title of Nobilitie, as it taketh such place, with a great many at this day, not onely to make them forget themselves, but in a maner that there is a God: So did it beare such swaie with the Heathens in times past, that they were not contented to deriue their pedigree from men reputed most noble in the worlde, but euen from the Goddes: As the Herculians, and Aeacides in Greece, who thought not themselves sufficientlie honored to descend of Hercules and Achilles (two of the most famous men in the world) but perswaded themselves, that they were ingendred of the seed of the Gods. In like manner great men at this day (albeit Religion will not permit them to fetch their beginning from heauen:) yet for the most part haue they let themselves beene caried away with fabulous pedigrees, and vaine perswasions, that their Nobilitie and descent, is farre more worthy and noble, then the house indeed they come of. Such are they commonlie, who wanting vertue, haue nothing else to grace their nobilitie withall, but the auncient stocke and familie they are descended of: Albeit it were more praise worthy, to be born the sonne of a common Crier, with Horace; or of a Mason, with Socrates, or of uncertaine parentes with Euripides, and to be vertuous, and learned: then the sonne of Nero, or of Domitian, and to be vitious.

Aristotle in his booke of Policie, restraineth Nobilitie, and limiteth it so farre foorth, as the successours doe possesse the vertues, and substance of their auncestors. And indeed without vertue, it is as a ring of gold, wanting the ornament

To the Reader.

ornament of some pretious stone : for it is vertue that giueth true dignitie, and not nobilitie which bringeth vertue. It was vertue that did so inflame the heartes of *Q. Maximus*, and *P. Scipio*, when they did see the images of their predeceffors, that the fire neuer left burning, untill they had attained to like degree of honour. Contrarilie, they dishonour their house, whose beeing by descent noble borne, doe by vice degenerate from their auncestors, and are to be accounted more vile then those of the common sort, nay then the dumbe Images of Marble : the Image still retaining the opinion of his vertues, whom it dooth represent, whereas they doe detract (as much as in them lyeth) from the dignitie of their predeceffours.

But why doe I seeke to enter to speake of that, which my Author hath handled, with no lesse learning, then pleasure? which that I may somewhat acquaint you withall, you shall vnderstand, that as *Cicero* in his booke *De Oratore*, doth bring diuers learned men of his time, to dispute and reason of an Orator, in three seuerall bookes : So dooth *Nenna* in three discourses, introduce diuers Ladies, and Gentlemen to argue of Nobilitie.

In the first, is spoken in the behalfe of Nobility of bloud, conioyned with riches : In the second, of Nobilitie purchased by vertue : In the third, whether of the two is to be preferred : and what true and perfect Nobilitie is, whence it proceedeth, how it is gotten, maintained and preserved. In which three bookes (if I bee not deceiued) all questions (or at the least the chiefeft) that may be obiected on either side, are thoroughly debated and answered, with great learning, and varietie of discourse. Concerning my paines therein, I shall reckon and esteeme it well bestowed, if I may vnderstand any of you haue reaped any contentment

To the Reader.

tentment or profit thereby, and that you take this my tra-
uaile in good part, whereby you shall giue mee incourage-
ment to proceede further with some greater labour, if in
any thing it may turne you to benefite. And so desiring
you friendlie to pardon my faultes, and to correct such er-
rors, as haue passed the presse, I doe wish you all hap-
pinesse and contentment. At my house by Cha-
ring Crosse this first of Nouem-
ber. An. 1595.

Your friend to vse,
W. Iones





Who so wil seeke by right deserts t'attaine
vnto the type of true Nobility,
And not by painted shewes & titles vaine,
Deriued farre from famous Auncestrie,
Behold them both in their right visnomy
Here truly pourtray'd, as they ought to be,
And striuing both for termes of dignitie,
To be aduanced highest in degree.
And when thou doost with equall insight see
the ods twixt both, of both thē deem aright
And chuse the better of them both to thee,
But thanks to him that it deserues, behight:
To *Nenna* first, that first this worke created,
And next to *Jones*, that truely it translated.
Ed. Spenser.



Here dost thou bring (my friend) a stranger borne
To be indenized with vs, and made our owne,
Nobilitie, whose name indeed is worne
By manie that are great, or mightie growne:
But yet to him most natural, best knowne,
To whom thou doost thy labours sacrificize,
And in whom al those vertues best are showne
Which here this little volume doth comprize.
Wheron when he shall cast his worthie eies,
He here shal glasse himselfe, himselfe shal reed:
The modell of his owne perfections lies
Here plaine describ'd, which he presents in deed:
So that if men can not true worth discern
By this discourse, looke they on him and learne.
Sa. Danyel.



G. Chapman to the Author.

A Ccept thrice Noble *Nennio* at his hand
That cannot bid himselfe welcome at home,
A thrice due welcome to our native strand,
Italian, French, and English now become.
Thrice Noble, not in that vnde Epethite,
But Noble first, to know whence Noblesse sprung,
Then in thy labour bringing it to light,
Thirdly, in being adorned with our tung.
And since so (like it selfe) thy Land affoords
The right of Noblesse to all noble parts,
I wish our friend, giuing thee English words,
With much desert of Loue in English harts,
As he hath made one strange an Englishman,
May make our mindes in this, *Italian*.

Ex tenebris.



MY artlesse Muse (if any muse at all)
Couched in rude, in base, in home attire,
Not fitting thoughts, or actions that aspire,
But led by loue, and graced principall
In this, she once was handmaid unto skill,
Would (if she durst her stem to raise so hie)
Blazon thy land, who of Nobilitie
So much hast shew'd, and therein dipt thy quill.
But sithe thy zeale to Honour Nennio
Whom thy desires haue brought from forreine soile,
Hath beene one cause of this thy taken toile,
Vnwaited on with praise thou mayst not goe.
For lookers on that doe partake thy pleasure,
Must of thy vertue find the pretious treasure.
Ang. Day.

Faults escaped in the Printing.

- Fol. 7. a. line 9. for wife, read, wise.
- fol. 8. a. line 1. read, for I am not only.
- fol. 11. b. line 31. for whereof, read, where.
- fol. 24. a. line 5. for waighters, read worthinesse.
- fol. eod. line 35. for his, read this.
- fol. 34. a. line 17. for Romans, read Romants.
- fol. 45. b. li. 10. read thy great wealth.
- fol. 55. a. line 34. read, by this.
- fol. 68. a. line. 31. read it wil be accompted.



A Treatise of Nobilitie, written by
the famous Doctor, and worthy knight,
 Sir Iohn Baptista Nenna of Bari.

The first Booke.



Tis a natural instinct
 in all liuing creatures,
 which causeth them
 to auoide such peril-
 lous encounters, as
 do most commonly
 crosse them in this
 life: Of the which we
 haue greatest occasi-
 on to beware, vwhen
 they are most dange-
 rous, and noysome.
 Which was the rea-

son, that remaining with my brother in the learned
 citie of *Antenor*, not somuch to the intent to get the
 knowlegde of some new Art, as to learn the courteous
 and good behauour of the place, being assailed with
 a pestilent mortalitie, in the yeare 1528. we endeou-
 red as much as in vs lay (setting our studie aside) to saue
 our liues (to which opinion the most agreed) and so
 we departed from thence, and came to the auncient

B

citie

A TREATISE

citie that *Iapiges* the sonne of *Dædalus* builded, scitu-
ate in the fertile countrey of *Pouglia*, neere vnto the
waues of the *Adriatique* Sea: Which place of abode
was farre more pleasing to vs then any other, in re-
gard wee were there straightwaies entertained of our
deere parents, and in possession of our owne substance,
from the which we had been a long time seclused. But
the season drawing neere, in the which the earth be-
ginneeth to cloath it selfe againe; this dangerous mor-
talitie followed vs euen vnto our own countrey, being
besides (without any pitie) afflicted, with cruel & sharp
wars, by the mightie inuasion of the Frenchmen. We
being then brought to this extremitie, to issue forth,
seemed by the wars to be forbidden vs; and to forsake
ech others company, by reason of the sicknes, seemed
not the best. Wherefore that we might in some sorte
discharge our selues of those heauie cares, which did
alwayes oppresse our pensue imaginations, wee
thought it best with choice of delightes (albeit wee
reaped small profite by them) to passe this wearisome
time.

As we led this kinde of life, I was one day against my
will surprised with a dead sleepe, in the which it seemed
vnto me, to be entred into a deepe and most obscure
valley, where from a farre off, there came toward me a
troup of yong ladies, all of them of verie venerable re-
gard. In y^e midst of which (as their queene) there mar-
ched a ladie, apparelled all in cloth of golde, set forth
with most costly Iewels. After her there followed ano-
ther, far stricken in age, yet worthy of great estimation,
whose garments were of a sanguine colour, hauing a
troupe of noble knightes going before her, some of
them carrying in their handes ancient priuiledges, o-
thers trophies, & triumphes of their victories. Behind
these

these I perceiued another ladie of soueraigne authoritie, whose eies did seeme as sparckles, and her countenance more liuely then anie I had euer before taken notice of, albeit she was verie old: Sometimes her bodie seemed not to surpass the common stature of women, and otherwhiles on the sodaine you would haue thought y she had exceeded the height of heauen: She held in her hands a roial scepter, and was attended on (with great reuerence) with a discreet, & learned company. To conclude, she seemed vnto me to be a most worthy ladie, of a mild aspect, and wonderfull view: before her marched the first three, as lesse worthy, who as she went had on her head a crowne, as the marke of a mighty queene; her garments were distinguished with diuers yellow, crimson, and Greene colours. And in as much as from her princely countenance, did proceed a shining light, I might easily perceiue al those things: & me thought y turning towards me, she said vnto me.

Yong man, the burthen of thy thoughtes, and the miserie of the life thou leadest, are not hidden from me: wherefore to ease the one, and remedie the other, depart from this place, and take some new helpe vnto thee, to the end thou maiest at the last purchase a more sure, and vertuous estate of life. Scarfe had she vttered these wordes, before I heard a rude and feareful voice, which said vnto me: Packe hence, and be carefull of thy safetie.

Being much amazed at that voyce which had euen pierced my heart, and with my spirites loosing my naturall colour; at one instant breaking off both my dreame, and sleepe, I awaked: and after that I had a little called my wittes together, I pondered often in my vnserled imagination, what those thinges might signifie I lately dreamed on.

A TREATISE

Considering then vvith my selfe the trueth of her wordes, and how much man is rather bound to follow vertuous actions then vaine pleasures, which I had addicted my selfe vnto : I vndoubtedly determined, to followe her faithfull counsell, and vtterly to abandon that kinde of life, which by the ill disposition of time, I was forced to leade. Vvherein notwithstanding, fortune seemed not greatly to fauour me : for much time ouerpassed not, before that the warre being in some sort appeased, all our companie together with the ladies and others (some being tied together by kindred and allyance : others by knot of friendship) as well to auoide the scorching heate, as the frequentation of much companie in so contagious a season ; transported themselues to a Grange of ours, seuen miles distant from the towne. There by reason of the conueniencie of a faire house, and of a most pleasaunt and wonderfull delightfull garden, we still remained, spending the time continually in such sports and pastimes, as the season of the yeare, the place and the companie did require.

It happened on a day, that as *Fabricio*, and *Possidonio* (two young gent. of our companie) walked abroad, they espied a noble ladie comming towardes them, whose name was *Virginia*, accompanied with an honourable traine, who was going right towardes the citie : whom when they were come neare vnto, they entertained with such reuerence, as was due vnto her, and besought her to make stay in that place, & to dine with vs : Shee seeing her selfe constrained by their earnest entreaties, remained there with them, and was courteously receiued of this pleasant companie . After shee had refreshed her selfe together with other ladies, she took view of the house, garden, & that which
was

was most worthy to behold, the Gentlewomen, vvhoe alwaies accompanied hir foot by foot, vnto the place vvhether the tables vvere couered for dinner: euery one of vs being serued in very decent & good order, & hauing store of good & delicate meats, & most excellent wine, vve passed out dinner very merily, not vvithout many pretie quips: In the end it pleased this noble Lady (not vvithout great sorrow of the vvhole company) to depart from vs, & hauing with most gentle speech taken her leaue of the gentlemen and gentlewomen, she in like sort vvent her vvay, after shee had thanked them all; vvvhich notwithstanding, the tvvo yong gentlemen vvho first inuited her, did still accompanie hir: but after they had gone some prety distance frō vs, she vvould not suffer them to passe any further, but staying her selfe and turning tovvardes them, shee spake vnto them after this maner. The gracious intertainment, the noble exercise, and pleasant abode of this frolicke companie, haue this day bound my heart vnto them in such sort, that I shall neuer lose the remembrance therof. Whervvithall taking a rich gold ring curiously vvrought forth of her bosome, she said: And to the end that you may be as mindfull of me, as is lawfully permitted, I doe bestovv this ring vpon him that is the most noble of you tvvo, vvhom I incharge to vveare it in remembrance of me.

The conclusion of hir speech, and her departure vvere at one instant, leauing the ring in his hands, who vvhen she gaue it did not so vvillingly accept thereof. Howbeit *Possidonio*, as one descending of an ancient & noble family, being besides indued vvith great riches, claimed the gift: but *Fabricio*, vvho reckoned himselfe nothing inferiour to the other in nobilitie (albeit that his ancestors were not of so noble bloud, nor him-

A TREATISE

selfe blessed with so great wealth) hee pretended vvith great vehemencie, that the ring belonged vnto him, because that from his youth, hee had been vertuously raised to that substance he possessed, and thereby become wise, prudent and well conditioned. So soone as they were returned to their companie, they straightwaies declared the cause of their variance, shewing them the ring, which was framed in circle wise: on the one side whereof there was the picture of a yong ladie apparelled like a nymph, vvho held in her hand a royal Crowne, in such sort as if she would haue set the same vpon some bodies head, round about the which was vvritten in Latine *Dignus coronabitur ipsa*, Let the most vvorthy be crowned herewith.

On the other side was the pourtraiture of a gallant young man crownded thervvith, vvho held in his hand a green bough not much vnlike vnto an Oliue branch, about the vvchich vvvas ingraued, *Victor, & merito coronatus*; I am crowned herewith as the conquerour, and that by desert.

But by reason the controuersie betweene these two young Gentlemen, did grow more and more, vvho by occasion thereof arriued there vnawares, they were all of one opinion (to the ende, that vvhereas this pleasant companie vvwere mette together onelie for their recreation, that enmitie and hatred might not grow thorough this sodaine accident) to bout out the troth of this their doubt, they shoulde one after another set dovvne their reasons, and afterwarde stand to the iudgement of a third person.

A Gentleman called *Nennio*, (one of the companie) vvvas indifferently chosen by them, for that purpose, vvho after he had heard the reasons debated on both sides, shoulde by his wisdom, giue iudgement
and

and sentence, from vvhich they promised they would not appeale, but friendly rest satisfied therewith. Albeit that the burthen thereof seemed heauie to *Nennio*, yet did he willingly sustaine it, considering that peace on all sides would follow thereby.

And because that on either part the discourse was intertained with no lesse profite, then pleasure, with pretie subtile argumentes, and wittie conclusions, I determined (asvvel to auoide the heate of the season, as to keepe me from idlenesse) with my pen (such as it is,) to set them downe in vvriting.

■ A great part of the day was already ouerpassed, and the sun in his declining, when as both the Gentlemen & ladies by common consent did descend to the most pleasant place of the garden, vvhere vve sate orderly in circle-wise vpon the thin grasse, which vnder the shadowy sweet-smelling trees was defended from the parching heate of the sunne beames. *Possidonio*, as one desirous to be the first that should enter into the listes, was set in a place somewhat higher than the rest; vvho after he saw vs all equally attentiu, and that our eares seemed as it were readie to heare him, gaue this beginning vnto his speech.

Fabricio, If I knewe thee to be of that force, that thou wert able to impugne the least of my reasons, how weake soeuer they may seeme to be, I shoulde imagine my selfe to be in farre greater danger then I am. But contrarily, it cannot anie way sinke into my thought, by vvhat meanes thou art able to resist them, nor with what reason that carrieth with it a resemblance of troth, thou art able to arme thy selfe against me.

Wherfore in my opinion it were far more fit, & more commendable before so worthy an audience (to the
end

A TREATISE

end the mindes of the assistants might be more intentiue) to discourse of some other question more doubtful then this we are to intreate of, it rather becoming thy estate and condition, euen at the beginning to keepe silence: and yet it may be, that this discourse liketh thee better, that thereby thou maiest set forth the ancient and honourable stocke of thy predecessors, and their great large riches and reuenues. Howsoeuer it be, that thou maiest not take me to be out of the matter, I will returne to our disputation.

Worthy Gentlemen, the doubt vvhich this day is hapned amongst vs, is not vnknowne vnto you (if so it be that vve ought to call it a doubt) for surely a more easie controuersie did neuer rise amongst men. VVe shall soone see if *Fabricio* be more noble then I am, or vvhether I am more honourable then hee is. He might vvith more reason make a question, vvhether the day be more cleerer than the night, or the sunne more hote then the Moone: and perhaps there might be greater cause to doubt thereat, the basenesse of his birth, and the vvorthinesse of my bloud being more then sufficiently knowne vnto you. But seeing it is your pleasure that vve shall discourse thereof, I will vvillingly yeeld, being more constrained thereunto to satisfie your desire then forced by reason, not distrusting anie vvhit of obtaining the victorie.

It lying then vpon me (louing Gent.) to prooue vnto you that I am a noble man, yea farre more noble then *Fabricio*: I will first shew you vvhat nobilitie is, which if vve do rightly vnderstand as we ought, I doubt not but that our controuersie vvill be finally determined without anie further debating of the matter. I affirme that to be true nobilitie (for *Fabricio*, thou canst not varie from the opinion of all men) vvvhich of long time hath
been

OF NOBILITIE.

5

beene left by the predeceffours vnto the fucceffors, as a hereditarie gift, the name whereof is as wel imprinted in them, as the forme of the body; in asmuch as hee that is borne of a noble family, so soone as he is brought forth into the world, is esteemed amongst the number of noble men, which is no lesse apparant then true; for asmuch as if we consider any noble man whatsoeuer, surely those that descend from him, shall be reckoned amongst such as are noble men.

Who is he so void of reason, that doth not account those as noble men, who are discended of the stocke of the *Sforsi*, of these of *Ests*, of the *Gonsagui*, and of a number of other most noble races? Surely, no manne. He then is a Noble man, who is issued of a noble familie. Let vs then consider whether I or thou, are sprung of noble parentes, to the end that the most noble of vs both may bee knowne. Tell me I pray thee, and take no scorne to let me know, whether thy ancestors were Noble men, or not: nay whether they were so much as reckoned amongst gent. which surely I belecue thou art not able to shew me. If then no Nobilitie was lefte thee by thy auncesters, how doest thou now take that boldnesse vpon thee, to giue thy selfe the tytle of a nobleman? By what meanes doost thou seeke to intrude thy selfe into the company of Gentlemen? What hope hast thou to bee adiudged the more noble? Surely I know not how I should perswade my selfe therein: but contrarily, you cannot make any doubt, but that this nobilitie was left me by my predeceffors, for both my grandfathers, and their great grandfathers and their issue, haue still as it were from hande to hand, maintained themselves in the order of noblemen: forsomuch as they haue alwaies shewed themselves worthie men at Armes, and many of them haue beene lords of Castles,

C

A TREATISE

stles and of Townes, albeit that enuious fortune hath bereft them of the greater part of this substance. I will not further enlarge my discourse, to reckon vp what my predecessors haue beene, being certaine that they are no lesse knowne vnto you, then to my selfe.

Wherefore it may well be concluded, that I beeing the successour of right Noble men, and thou borne of base parentage, that I am a Noble man, and thou art not; and so consequently the ring which this day was giuen by the Lady *Virginia*, belongeth vnto mee, as to the most noble of the two. Now see *Fabricio* howe by little and little, I haue made it manifest, that thou art deceiued. Yet if so it were that thou shouldst denie my conclusion, which is most true in it selfe, I woulde so forcible work, that thou shouldst of necessitie be constrained to yeeld therunto. For if they who doe expose their liues to a thousand dangers, as it were men banished from their own houses, the space of many yeares, in the seruice of their king, their countrey, or other princes, to purchase to themselves a glorious name euerslastinglie, did consider that so soon as they should depart this life, their renown and their glorie should die with them, and not remaine to their children, and posterity; he might surely be accounted foolish that woulde take paines, or indure any trauel or disquiet: but they waighing that this name which they did get amongst bloody battails, did not onlie adorne their own persons (which should indeed be but a smal thing) but likewise all their whole stocke after them, they did not against their wil, but of their own accord enter into such toile, & labour. Whereby it followeth of necessitie that we conclude, that the selfe-same renowne, and the selfe-same Nobilitie, that was in their ancestors whatsoeuer it be, is transferred to their posteritie: Because that naturally we haue
no

no better instrument, nor more perfect means, by which the glorie and Nobilitie which is in men, may indure longe, then their children & posteritie: by them nobilitie is preserved, by them the generositie of families is liuelie maintained. Hitherto the words of *Possidonio* were continued, with a wonderful attention and without anie interruption: when *Fabricio* turning himselfe towards him spake after this manner. Passe on no further *Possidonio*, for I intend to answer thee to that thou hast thus far discoursed, & thou shalt vnderstand whether this nobilitie vvhich we seeke for, doth remaine in blood, or not: & then thou mayst at leisure proceed, for as thou shalt frame thine argumentes, so will I likewise answer thee. At which offer *Possidonio* paused, but the company vvhould not suffer that *Fabricio* should intermeddle to answer *Possidonio* his discourse, vntill hee had ended that which he should bee able to alledge in his defence. Wherefore silence being made, *Possidonio* proceeded after this maner.

You see moreouer (worthy Gent.) what operation nature affoordeth to the innobling of man. For if wee consider the gifts which it lendeth in the generation of man, you shall finde them wholie assembled in our fauour. Forso much as first it yeeldeth to this, that the ingendring of children is permitted to man, by meanes of his oovn blood; and after that it hath brought them forth into the vworld, it laboureth to cause them to bee like vnto those, whose natural blood is dispersed in their bodies: herehence proceedeth y^e excessiue loue which the father naturallie beareth to his son, vvhich to speak the troth surpasseth all other loues in this worlde; as is best knowne vnto them that haue made tryall therof; the ingendred being deemed a part and member of the ingenderer.

A TREATISE

Now whosoever he be that is begotten of a gentleman, and consequently of Noble blood, who will once denie but that he is part of y^e begetter? Surely no man. Why then the worthy nobilitie of the m, no otherwise then their owne blood, is dispersed in their children, as in a part of themselves. And namelie adde heereunto y^e naturall resemblance of the father, which oftentimes denoteth cleerlie in their posteritie, the gracious countenance and good members, not onely of the father, but euen of the auncesters likewise. Herehence afterwards it cometh, that as it were, euen the very manners, and liuely spirits with many of their vvorthy provvesses, are transfused into their children.

And of this the valiant deeds of *Scipio* the great may make thee assured, which as I haue often heard, and I beleue thou knowest right well, were not vnequall to the prowesses of his father *Cornelio*. The like haue I vnderstood of the other *Scipio*: and if these were not of themselves sufficient, I coulde alledge manie other moderne examples. But you may be easilie perswaded herein, by that which we see euerie daie, that vvhilest vve are children, vve doe so retaine within our selues, the childish conditions, vvhich are learned of our fathers, or of anie other whatsoever, that growving afterwarde to greater age, they remaine so fast fixed in our hartes, vvhether they be good or euill, as if we had beene taught them by nature hir selfe: and according to the diuersitie of men, vve doe learne diuers sortes of manners, for a husband man his sonne (or to speake generallie) a Hosier his child, or such like, wil not be of the same behauior & value, as a gent. his son, bicause there is more care had in y^e one, & the other is rudely brought vp. Wherby it is easilie gathered, that the maners and prowesse of the father is conueyed from him vnto the children,

children, and so consequently his nobilitie. Seeing then that nature doth in the creation of man yeeld bloud and resemblance, whence this fatherly loue doth spring, to whom shall this sort of Nobilitie which we tearme of bloud be left, but to a man his own children? surely not vnto straungers, which euen nature it selte would withstand.

Possidonio passed on no further being in his discourse interrupted by Madame *Cassandra* (a wife and beautifull ladie of the companie) who hauing a little called her wittes together, set vpon him after this maner.

If it be not lawfull for *Fabricio* at this time to answere thy discourse, *Possidonio*, yet shall hee hereafter haue time, and memorie sufficient to satisfie thy reasons. In whose behalfe likewise I doe not seeke to say any thing: and if I should, surely he should be but badly defended by me. But that which I intend is as strongly as I can to maintain those reasons which make for vs women: for without making any mention of the, you haue sleightly passed ouer them. In y^e ur last speech (if so be that I did wel comprehend what you said) you gaue vs to vnderstand, that who so is ingendred of the bloud of a noble man, is nobly borne: In asmuch as nature hath granted thus much vnto you, that children are engendred by meanes of your bloud: whereunto you added the resemblance of the father, and his great loue towards his children, which are all giftes of nature.

Now, if we will by a more true meane consider the trueth of thy speech, I perswade my self that these gifts which thou callest gifts of nature, being more proper to the woman the to the man (as may easily be shewed) that in the Nobilitie of man, the Nobilitie of the mother ought rather to be considered then the Noblenes of the father. Who is so ignorant (at least if this Nobilitie

A TREATISE

litie which thou speakest of consisteth in bloud) that the bloud of the woman is no lesse sought by nature to ingender children, then the bloud of the man? Nay rather much more on our side, because, as you know, the child once cōceiued, is by the space of many months nourished in our wombe, with our owne bloud, & sometimes two yeares after it is borne: whence it appeareth that children receiue a greater quantity of bloud of the mother then from the father. I will forbear to speake of y^e paine of our bodie, the danger we are in, in child bearing; the anguish, and labour we sustaine to bring them vp: al which things may euidently proue vnto you, y^e the loue of the mother is far greater towards her child the the fathers is: yea and sometimes likewise the child will as well resemble the mother, as the father: all which is most manifest.

I say then, that if I would knowe if one be a gent. which is the marke you shoot at, I will haue recourse vnto the qualitie of his mother, whether shee were a gentlewoman, and not vnto the conditiō of his father, whether he were a gentleman, as you lately did argue: which may with reason be beleueed. But you men make laws as you list, & draw your reasōs as liketh you best, setting vs silly women aside, as if we were none of the number of the world: but if it were lawfull for vs to be present at your counsels, peraduenture matters would go otherwise, and so many thinges would not passe for currant (as this should haue done) as they do.

Herewithall the ladie *Cassandra* held her peace, and all the ladies did highly commend that which shee had spoken in their fauour, when as *Possidonio*, not determining to replie anie thing vnto her wordes, spake after this maner.

Madame, as for me it is all one, whether wee take
the

the bloud of the father, or of the mother: for I not only both by my fathers and mothers side, come of noble bloud; but my grandfathers, grandmothers, great grandfathers, and great graundmothers, were on both sides of most noble descent, as is not vnknowne vnto you.

The wise lady did not rest contented with *Possidonio* his answer, as if he had spoken smallie to the purpose, when as maister *Dominico*, one of my brethren, determining to satisfie her demaund, taking the matter vpon him, said vnto her:

Madame, I perswade my selfe, that if it were lawfull for you women to be present at our counsailes, as you saie, that your vertues would equall the Amazonian ladies, who banished their husbands, tooke vpon them the gouernment of the kingdome, and disposed thereof at their pleasure, defending with their sword the feminine libertie. Of the same mind was *Valasqua* queene of the *Bohemians*, vwho conspiring with the principall ladies of that kingdome, effected the same thing: but I belecue you are not nowe a daies of so haughty a courage. Howsoeuer it be, I would not haue you belecue, that you are any vvaies defrauded of your right, in that you propose, nor in any other thing in the vworld, but rather vwhere anie fauour or aide may be giuen you, both the lavve, and the lavve makers, are readie therein: and you ought to be persvaded, that men doe not make lavves as they list, as you doe imagine: for sometimes vvomen (vvhen as lavves made by men, haue not been pleasing vnto them) they haue boldly opposed themselves against them. As on a time at Rome a generall lavv being made, it vvas scarcely kept tvventie yeares: and it vvas this, that no vvoman should apparell her selfe in diuerse colours,
nor

A TREATISE

nor weare anie ornament of gold that did exceede the waight of halfe an ounce, with such other like matters, by which the lasciuious and licentious life of women, was restrained: for the principall ladies of Rome being assembled together, without any regard or shame, not without great danger of sedition in the citie, they did breake this lawe. Nowe then to satisfie you in that which lately you alleadged for the defence of women, in the midst of this disputation: I saie, that I do not denie that in engendring of children, more quantitie of bloud doth abound on your side then on ours, because that so soone as the creature is conceiued in your body, it is nourished therewith. But you ought to knowe Madame, that the men of the worlde haue established this lawe for firme, that in the Nobilitie of man, the condition and noblenesse of the father is considered, and not of the mother: for it is manifest, that when as in a subiect of perfection manie degrees doe concur together, wee take the name of the most worthy, and that of most power. As for example, wee see in the most renowned maiestie of our ladie and mistresse, whose life being adorned with all worthinesse, and replenished with a most singular prouidence of honestie and holinesse, is not onelie bruted in our countrey, but thorow all the world, shee is lawfully duchesse of our citie, and of a large extent of land, Princes of many other places, and most worthie queene of *Polonia*, and yet we terme her not by the title of Duchesse, or Princes, but alwaies call her queene, as the name of most worth, and most power. Nowe who doubteth but that the man, is farre more worthie, and of greater might then the woman? Peradventure Madame you will denie this. Surely you cannot, because this is no law which we men haue made,

as

as you beleue, but his law that hath made both man, and woman : when as hee taking displeasure against our first mother, said, man shal alwaies beare rule ouer you. It is then no woonder if wee seeke the condition of our father, as more worthy and excellent for the ennobling of man, then our mothers estate.

Moreouer, consider one of these images, and behold likewise this stone which is neere vnto it, of the which there may easily another image be framed, which of these two will you deeme more worthie, the image or the stone ? surely in my opinion the image. Nowe a woman is no other thing then as it were that stone, that is to saie, a simple matter, and man is as the forme or fashion, and like as for the perfection thereof the matter doth couet the forme, so doth a woman for her perfection desire a man. We will then conclude, that a woman is so much lesse worthy then the man, as the matter is of lesse estimation then the forme ; or as that which suffereth, is lesse worthy then that which doeth. Hereof it followeth, that we ought to be called after the name of the man as the most worthy. So that this proposition is true, that in nobilitie, we haue onely to consider, the noblenesse of the father.

M. *Dominico* hauing ended his talke, the lady being wel aduised, replied nothing thereunto, as though shee had been thoroughly satisfied therewith, when as *Possidonio* following on his enterprise, began to speake after this maner.

Gentlemen and ladies : The force which nature giueth to this nobilitie is so great, that wee see it doth not only preserue the same in man, but likewise in other liuing creatures, not partakers of reason, yea euen in plants, as we may see in horses, dogs, trees, and in other things. For if I desire a faire horse, or a good dog, or if

A TREATISE

I intend to graft any excellent fruit, I will first of all seeke out the most noble horse, the best hunting spaniell, and the most excellent tree of that sort which I can possibly finde, because it wil neuer faile to prooue like vnto that which hath engendred it, or to the plant. And euerie kind (to which nature hath giuen vertue to bring forth fruite) produceth it like, and not disagreeing to it selfe, as we may see euerie where: whence it commeth to passe that man cannot engender any other thing then man. Wherefore if thou grauntest vnto me *Fabricio* (and impossible it is but thou shouldest yeeld thereunto) that if I be descended of a noble family, it must needs follow (if we will not gainsay the law of nature) that I am a noble man.

Possidonio paused a while from his discourse, or els made some stay to bethinke himselfe howe hee might further proceede to fortifie his enterprise, and to trouble his enemy, or rather cleane to stop vp the passage, that he might without any outrage obtaine the desired victorie; when as *Madam Laura* (the yongest amongst the ladies, though no lesse indued with wit and vertue then the rest, being besides of a quicke capacitie) turning towards *Possidonio*, with a womanlike bashfulness, opened her corall lips, and began to speake in this sort.

Possidonio and *Fabricio*, I know not whether it may become me or no, to entermeddle with your disputations, which perhaps are not fit for ladies, especiallie for me which haue so little to say: but being rather courteous to learne, then desirous to contradict any of you, if it may be lawfull for me, I will speake that which commeth into my remembrance, least otherwise I should be blamed for a ladie of no sound iudgement, and full of presumption.

Fabricio

Fabricio immediatly gaue this answere. God forbid Madame, nay rather your vertue thereby will appeare more clearer, replenished with most sound iudgment, and not as you say, worthy any blame. For albeit it is not so bebecoming for ladies to discourse of this argument, as it is delightfull to heare the; notwithstanding it shalbe a thing lawfull, & permitted both for your self, the rest of these ladies, and anie of the gentlemen, to entermeddle and speake what so shall come into their mindes, whether it be in doubting, answering, reproofing, arguing, or resolving of any thing, either on the one side or of the other, according to euery man his best iudgement. Forsomuch as the trueth of this controuerisie ought to be drawne from vs all, albeit that *Possidonio*, and my selfe in mine owne defence are chosen to yeeld our reasons.

Possid. hauing shewed himself conformable to *Fabricio* his wil, the lady *Laura* after a long cōtinued speech, with a womanlike voice, added that which followeth.

This is no smal matter, that hauing demanded leaue for my selfe only, I haue obtained it for the whole companie. For the which I doe giue thanks vnto you both: which being said, she turned againe towards *Possidonio*, and spake vnto him in this sort.

It seemeth vnto me *Possidonio*, that the scope of thy last words did tend to this end: that in as much as man cannot engender any thing els but man, that thou being descended of noble parents, art for that cause a noble man, which in my iudgement cannot in any wise be wel concluded. For albeit that a man cannot beget any other thing then man, yet it followeth not that y same qualities shuld remain in the children which are in the parents; & so consequently he y is born of a noble man, albeit that of his father he receiue his being, and the

A TREATISE

forme of his bodie, yet shall hee not receiue nobilitie therewith, which is as a qualitie, which either may be, or not be in the subiect.

Nay contrarily *Madame*, quoth *Possidonio*, he which is borne, receiueh in like maner the self same qualities: because that if a man be white, the child shal likewise be participant of his whitenes: if he be blacke, he shall be partaker of his blacknes: In asmuch as whosoeuer giueth the essence or being, he giueth likewise that which followeth the essence, which is manifestly prooued in our selues, and the *Ethiopians*.

The yong lady stood at a stay, it may be not knowing how to frame a reple. Wherefore *Possidonio* hauing a litle takē breath, folowed on his discourse in this maner.

Gentlemen, by that which may be gathered by the words which I haue spoken, you may perceiue that nobilitie in man is giuen him of nature, and infused in his bloud; wherfore like as the lawes of nature are stable, & firme, so likewise nobilitie in the family of man thorow his bloud, by which it is continued, is permanent and durable.

Here *M. Iohn Francisco*, one of the companie taking the speech vpon him, said in this sort. The force of nature is so great in the procreation of children, that verie seldom, or almost not at all, there is any difference betweene the father and the child, as I will make manifest vnto you, by a tale or historie (if so you please I call it) by which you may know the mightie power of Nature in the nobilitie of man.

There was a gallant and noble ladie, who dwelleth not farre from hence (whose name for the respect I beare vnto her, I wil not manifest) married to a worthie knight, by whom she conceaued, and did beare a faire yong sonne. And as it happeneth very often, not so much

much in regard of the opportunitie which these ladies haue, as in respect that for the most part they liue daintily and idley : it chanced (whether it were thorowe loue, or of her owne free will) her husband perceiuing nothing thereof, that she ioyned herselfe to one of his seruants, so that in succession of time she brought forth two children. Now these growing further in age, the eldest did so farre exceede his other brethren (for so were they all esteemed by the father) as the supposed father, did surpasse the true father : for as he waxed bigger, so did he grow comely of personage, and quicke of wit, whereas the other were very fooles, and block-heads ; and the eldest of them did continually exercise himselfe in worthy and valorous actions, he desired to learne to be vertuous, hee tooke pleasure in horses, to run at the ring, and in al other honourable kinds of exercise, which by reason of his age hee was able to vndergoe, but the rest shewed themselves as base, & far from dooing any vertuous action : and indeed hee did no lesse shine amongst them, then the sunne amidst the rest of the planets ; the follie and cowardise of the other two, vvas so great, that the common report did run euery where, that like as in behauiour and wit, they did differ from the other, so likewise they had another father : and their slothfulnesse (besides that there vvas no resemblance betweene him and them) imprinted so great a beleefe in the husband, that hee constrained his wife to confesse the troth vnto him, and in the end she being no lesse forced by experience, then by nature it selfe, she opened the whole secret vnto him.

And besides the Lady I speake of, I knowe yet two other women, who although they be descended of base parentage, yet are they faire and gracious to beholde, who not contenting themselves with their husbandes,

A T R E A T I S E

as ill disposed vvomen are woont to doe, did when opportunity serued them, and do stil, take their pleasure with yong men of Noble bloud, bringing forth fruite answerable to their voluptuous pleasure; and this I know for troth, that by them they haue brought forth most noble children, whereas of their husbandes they haue had most clownish creatures, so that euen in beholding their naturall forme, and the constitution of their body, they doe giue sufficient testimony thereof. By this you may see how nature sheweth her power in the nobilitie of bloud; seeing from the same wombe is borne (by reason either of the noble or ignoble seede) a gentle and diuine spirite, and another abiect and base. And as concerning that *Madam Cassandra*, which you alledged euen now: answere might be made vnto you besides that which already is saide; That albeit in the generation of mankind there aboundeth more bloud on the woman her part, greater daungers, and greater labours, yet notwithstanding we ought to haue regard vnto the dignitie of the man, and not of the woman: for as concerning this matter we will compare the woman to the earth, which bringeth forth fruit according to the seed it receiueth.

Hereunto maister *Dominico* again taking the speech vpon him said, These examples of yours M. *Iohn Francisco*, doe bring into my remembrance the successe of *Romulus* and *Remus*, who descended of the auncient royall stocke of the *Siluii*, and were as histories doe report, being little ones, by the commandement of their vncle *Amulius*, cast into the riuer *Tyber*, on the banks whereof *Faustulus* maister of the kinges sheepe did find them, who knowing who they were, gaue them to *Laurencia* his wife, that she might bring them vp; who notwithstanding was called a shee Wolfe, because she

did

did willinglie yeeld her bodie as common amongst the shepheards.

Now these children being brought vp in *Faustulus* his flocke, and growing in age, they did not intend the keeping of the beasts, nor the leading of a country life, but first giuing themselves to hunting, afterwardesto set vpō theeues, who were often endamaged by them, they began to shew the valor which was in them. And as fit occasion fel out, *Faustulus* declared y whole matter to *Numitor*, whoe before was banished out of the kingdome by his brother *Amulius*, which hee hauing vnderstood, immediatly his mind gaue him that they were his nephews, and comparing the time with their age, and considering their countenance, he verely affirmed, that they seemed not to bee clownes, nor of any base birth, but as if Nature hadde certified the troth, hee knewe that they came of the blood Royall, and so accepted them for his Nephewes: now whosoeuer will knowe what valour they were of, let him read further of them.

You may then see maister *Iohn Francisco*, howe nature doth manifest the power of Nobilitie of blood: for albeit they were nourished amongst shepheardes, yet was not their bringing vp a hinderance to their naturall vertue. Maister *Dominico* hadde not so soone ended his talke, but *Possidonio* taking the speeche vppon him, followed on his discourse in this sort.

Gentlemen; henceforward let vs forbear to bring so many reasons, as nature doth afford vs for the Nobility of blood, for surely time would not suffice to aledge al that may be said in that behalfe; & let vs a little weigh that which the cōmon brute & opinion of men dooth generally deem & beleeu therof. I wuld lern this of thee

Fabricio,

A TREATISE

Fabricio, vvhhat Towne, what Castle, and what village it is, where thou shalt not find this a general and common custome, to cal and account those noblemen, who are borne of a noble stocke? Surelie (as I beleue) no place in the world. Nay rather so soone as they are brought forth, they are reckoned amongst the number of those that are reputed noble, and men doe not without reason attribute vnto them such priuiledges as the countrey yeeldeth, sustaining likewise such labour and trauaile for the seruice and creation of them, as it behooueth them to vndertake.

This is a generall custome, which we doe see is put in practise euerie where. And tell me I pray thee, if thou doest so much regard me; if thou diddest desire to vnderstand or knowe whether one were a gent. or not, were it not sufficient for thee to heare that he is of the stocke of *Sainct Seuerini*, of the *Carraccolli*, or of the *Carrafi*, which are accounted most honorable amongst the noble families of Italie? Surely if thou doest not swarue from common equity; thou must of force bee constrained to confesse the troth.

Now I desire that euen thou thy selfe mayest conclude, and iudge whether of the two is the most noble, seeing that my house is as well knowne vnto thee as thine owne. and that it is sufficientlie manifest which of them both being named, is reputed the most noble. It may be thy hart will serue thee, to auerre that it is thy familie that is so renoumed in this Citie. I doe not beleue except thou wert madde, that any such folly would possesse thee, yet doe I perswade my selfe, that thou wouldst not be ashamed, with thy sophisticall arguments, to make men deeme, that white is black: yet know this, that it is an hard matter to resist the troth, & though I had not set vpon thee with any other weapon
then

then this last, it were sufficient to make thee stark dumb
But to passe on further, my force wil serue me to assaile
thee yet more fiercely; for albeit thou tokest me to daie
vnprovidèd, yet haue I other weapons to set vpon thee
vvithall.

Gent. I hauing hitherto manifestly proued vnto you,
both by nature and common custome, that he is noble,
whom nature hath brought forth of Noble parentes:
I will nowe with no lesse true, then pregnant reasons,
confirme the same vnto you. I doe affirme, and it is
not a thinge to be doubted of, that if any man or vvo-
man, did commit any act, that shame and reproch fol-
lowed thereof; not onely the said parties, but all their
posteritie are spotted with shamefull infamie, which we
doe euidentlie see euerie day: as for example, in a thou-
sand places you shall finde such as are murderers of
their own wiues, or haue laide violent handes on their
owne flesh, or beene executioners of their own sisters,
and such like: Only to repaire the insupportable disho-
nour which followeth the fact, which either the vvife,
daughter, or sister may haue committed in giuing them
selues in pray to others, it dooth like a pestilent morta-
litie, which by bad gouernement entreth into a towne,
spread it selfe all ouer, and infect all those that are of
that stocke. Nowe contrarilie I say, if any man by his
worthy prowesse, and lawdable actions, doth aspire to
great honour, surely all his posteritie ought to bee par-
takers of that honour, nay they are not partakers ther-
of, but it ought wholly and intirely to remaine vvith
them. For it should be against reason, whereas infamy
and dishonour shoulde by reason rather bee extingui-
shed, that they should haue a larger scope to extende
themselues in mans posteritie then renowme and glo-
rie of man.

E

My

A TREATISE

My predeceffors then, hauing beene men worthie of glorie, prosperous in renowme, deseruing honor, and consequently capeable of all Nobilitie; it followeth of necessitie, that all their renowme, glory and honor, and their Nobilitie resteth in mee, as their successour. Shall we say the like of thy predeceffors *Fabricio*, that there remaineth onely in thee, their worthinesse and Nobilitie, whatsoeuer it was? Tell me if thou hast any such reason in thy braine? But let vs yet proceede further, and I will yet alledge vnto thee another reason, to perswade thee more firmly in that which wee seeke after.

Suppose a father hath two children, valiant knights, and replenished with great learning, by which they make themselves worthy of honour, the father himself notwithstanding, being neither of valour nor learning; thou canst not denie mee, but y^e for al this the childrens honour and renowme redoundeth likewise to the father; for it is a common prouerbe, that the sons greater estimation, is the fathers greater honour. From whence wee see, that good fathers who haue care of their children, straine themselves in such sort, to bring them vp, as that thereby they merite high reputation:

By greater reason then (not passing, but therein following the order of nature) the worthinesse and greatness of parents, is transferred vnto their children, as a part, and substance of themselves: by which reason I may necessarilie conclude, that this worthinesse, greatness, and nobilitie, which hath been in my auncestors, remaineth now in me, who am a part & very substance of them. *Possidonio* pausing a little to gather breath; maister *Peter Anthonie* my brother, desiring to haue some part in this discourse, beganne to speake in this manner.

Seeing

Seeing that the Lady *Laura* (with a naturall grace) hath obtained leaue of you, that it is lawfull for vs to intrude our selues into your disputation, not only in doubting and resolving, but also in arguing; I will alleadge without passion or partialitie against any one partye, that which falleth into my remembrance fitte for this purpose: and if it strengthen thy side *Possidonio*, I promise thee *Fabricio*, I will doe the like for thee, as far as my memorie will serue me, and my vnderstanding will afford me matter. VWhereunto *Fabricio* answered.

Spare not to speake freelic what so it liketh you, for you cannot doe me a greater pleasure, then in arguing to alleadge such reasons, as shall bee in fauour of the victorie on *Possidonio* his behalfe, and contrarie to my opinion, forsomuch as with little labour I shall refute them. So much the more willinglie (quoth maister *Peter Anthonie*) both my selfe and others, will heereafter speake that which shall seeme best vnto vs, especially, before the troth be by this your disputation discovered.

There was then in times past, in the famous Citie of Rome this lawe (amongst others) helde in great reuerence, least that the memorable renowme of a valiant knight should with his life take ende, that the Images of those who had ouercome the enemies hoast, and conquered Kingdomes, not before brought into subiection, shoulde bee ingrauen and set in the most publike place of the Citie; vnder which a remembrance of their actes was written, which yet at this day we see in many places.

And that was done to the end (as I may say) to preuent nature in y^t it could not giue; which was to make them immortall by perpetuall commendation, as also to the ende that their successours pricked forward

A TREATISE

with the desire of like glory and renowne (like as valourous horses at the sound of the trumpet) might not fear the labours of the bodie, much lesse the dangers of life, to auoid and to repell from their countrey all aduerse accidents hurtfull to the same and to purchase for it, all triumphant and prosperous dignity that might bee for the auaille thereof.

In troth the Images and triumphes inflamed mens boldnesse, and gaue them great courage, and these eternall remembrances, did moue the hearts of men: who are naturally desirous of honour and glorie. For it was a thing ordayned among the Romaines at a certaine prefixed time, in festiuall manner to visite these bodies, and behold these Images. What more greater glorie & greater triumph may be desired in this world of any liuing man? Surely the hart cannot wish, nor the toung demand any greater.

Appliable to this purpose I say, that if these men in remembrance of their singular vertue and great courage, did attribute such great honour to images, vwhether they were marble or mettall, how much more did these owe to the liuing children, I beleue no lesse, but rather more; in as much as a fained forme of man, is lesse to be esteemed then that which representeth him truely. Which may bee apparantlie discerned by any whosoeuer, though but of small iudgement.

For what occasion did the common wealth of Rome set in gouernment the *Camilli*, *Fabii*, *Scipiones*, *Emiliij*, *Catones* and others, but for the glory and renowne of their predecessors? See we not the same obserued this day among moderne princes? It followeth then reasonably, that this grace and nobility which is in the predecessors, doth deseruedly remaine with the children.

Scarce had maister *Peter Anthony* ended his discourse,

course, when *Possidonio* pursued his speech after this maner.

It should be surely a foolish thing, to beleue that it remained with these immoueable and fained images, and not with their children. For what profit are they able to bring vnto the commonwealth? surely none (besides the example which by them is left to posteritie) but the offspring of noble men may yeeld & lend great helpe vnto it dayly as wee see continually. For as much as if wee looke into the estates and commonwealthes of the worlde, which are gouerned diuersly: shalt thou find *Fabricio* that the rule and managing of them is graunted to anie other, sauing to those that are reckoned to be noble? And if you demaund of whence this proceedeth. I would answere thee in my opinion, it ariseth of no other cause, then that the predecessors of him that is noble, hauing submitted not onely his goodes, but life also, to a thousand dangers and hazardes for his countrey, it should be great vngratitude, (nay rather might we iudge it crueltye) if that so soone as they receiued their last mortall wound, they shoulde slip out of remembrance, or that it should denie them the reward worthie their labours. Whereupon, that they may not incurre so great note of inhumanitie, the gouernment of commonwealthes ought to be giuen them, as good meanes to preserue them. And as they which doe represent the dead members of their predecessors.

Maister *Dominico* added hereunto: we doe not onlie see this vsed in our time, as in the rich and well ordered citie of *Venice* and elsewhere, we may perceiue that the gouernment and administration of the estate is giuen vnto gentlemen; but as I haue often read, the like was done in time past. In the citie of Rome at that time

A TREATISE

more renowned then any other, the Senators were held in great estimation of Nobilitie. And if they were accompted in the order of Senators, and consequently of true noble men which were descended of Senators: We wil then say, according to the former reasons, that the Children and issue of noblemen are true and perfect noble men. These last wordes were scarce ended, when as the ladie *Camilla*, whose naturall whitenesse tempered with a vermillion colour, hiding her selfe as if shee had somewhat been ashamed, her face burning like fire, & turning toward maister *Dominico*, in whom she put great trust, with a womans voice sayde thus.

It seemeth vnto me that this day you are all opposed to *Fabricio*, seeing that you cease not together with maister *Peter Anthonie*, to alleadge new reasons for *Possidonio*: but beside that hee himselfe in answering them can refute them al, I will not forbear to pay you in such sort as you know.

Madame (quoth hee) hereafter I will take heed, seeing that you are not pleased that wee shoulde entermeddle in this discourse, to the end that this day, I doe not against my will incurre a penaltie, which I am not able to beare.

These last words gaue occasion to the companie of laughter: whereupon *Fabricio*, without any farther stay, sayd:

Madame, let euerie one of them alleadge the most pregnant and strong reasons they can, for I shall not want courage sufficient to confute them all: doe not you know that the glorie of the conquerour is so much y greater, as the force of the vanquisher doth exceed: which was the cause that *Possidonio* laughing more at *Fabricio* his speech, as making smal accompt thereof,
then

then at the young Ladie, followed on after this sort.

We doe not onelie finde this to be true in the gouernment of Cities and Prouinces, but likewise in Bishoprickes, Cardinalshippes, and such other. Thou shalt not see *Fabricio* (and if it happen, it is verie sel-dome) that these offices and dignities are bestowed vpon anie other then gentlemen. By which thou mayest well consider what helpe and profite those do bring vnto vs, which are borne of Noblemen, more then the fained images of the Romaines held by them in great obseruance, for an euerlasting remembrance.

Consider beside those reasons alreadie recited, that with Princes, Kinges, Emperours, Popes and in anie place of estate, the noble man by bloud goeth formost, and hee which is noblie borne is onelie honoured, and to him onelie, the place fit for his nobilitie, is by good right alway graunted.

M. *Iohn Francisco*, with a good grace added here-vnto.

We doe not only see this in vse among Princes, but also among priuate persons, that Noble men are preferred before other: especially, when they meete at banquets, where they are more honoured, and serued with more attendance.

Maister *Dominico* taking the speeche vpon him againe said, I haue yet other reasons to alleadge in the fauour of *Possidonio*, but that I feare to incurre this day her disgrace, which I would not: The ladie *Camilla*, hauing by threates forbidden that, which gratiouly you had graunted. To whom in anger shee answered; And what would you say more, then that you haue alreadie spoken? Madam, quoth he, I would say that:

The

A TREATISE

The great Architect of heauen and earth intending to send his only beloued sonne into the world to couer his diuinitie with our humanitie, to the ende to free man, who was miserably wrapped in sinne (For scarce had he been framed by his creator, but he immediatly shewed himselfe disobedient towardses him, and that by subtle deceite of him, who rebelling against his maker, was with his copartners banished the heauens, and is eternally condemned to the depth of hell) This diuine word, to become man did not chuse those parents in this world, which were of an abiect and base familie, but his wil was, to descend of the royal blood of *Dauid*. He was surely most meeke, humble and poore, in that he loued al these things & preached the same to others, yet notwithstanding, he would not be born of a meane and base blood as I said. If then this nobilitie of blood, was esteemed of the sonne of God, man incarnate, how much more ought wee who are his followers, deeme it a thing to be beloued and reuerenced? surely verie much. Doe we not reade likewise, that *Herod Ascalonita* the sonne of *Antipater*, of base lineage, being chosen king of *Iudea* by *Octavian* the second Emperor, hee made a decree, that all the bookes wherein were written the noble and great generations of the twelue Patriarches shuld be burned, to the end y he being not found there written among the, by succession of time might easily be credited, that because hee was king of *Iuda*, he was descended of the blood Royall (I meane of the stocke of *Israel*) from whence the Patriarches were deriued, which he infinitely desired, to the end that he and his successors might be alwaies reputed in the number of noble men?

Doe not we reade likewise of *Equitius*, who being the sonne of a bondslaue and made free, did seine himselfe

selfe to be the sonne of the most renowned *Tiberius Gracchus*? What shall I say of him that tooke vpon him that boldnesse, that with a maruellous subtiltie, hee perswaded the people of Rome that hee was the sonne of *Octavia*, sister of the Emperour, and of *Marcus Antonius*, and that hee was descended of the royall bloud? And of that Barbarian, sprong of base parentage, who in regard of the naturall resemblance which hee did beare to *Ariarat* king of *Cappadocia*, alreadie slaine by *Marcus Antonius*; tooke vpon him the courage to say that hee was king *Ariarat*, by which meanes the Cities of *Asia*, yeelded the kingdome vnto him.

You may see how great a number there was of those, who not contenting themselves with their base birth, haue sought (as manie do at this day) to ennoble themselves in the worthie families of other men. Wee may then well conclude, that there is no small number, but contrarily the greater part of the world doe runne after this nobilitie, to make themselves worthy of glory, and leaue a memorable renowne vnto their posteritie.

You may see then Madame *Camilla*, whether I haue had anie thing to say in the fauour of *Possidonio*, and whether I haue not stopt vp *Fabricio* his passage? Whereunto she answered, that which thou hast stopped, he wil easily breake through, and finde meanes to binde thee surely. Some such wordes passing between them, *Possidonio* followed on his discourse, after this maner.

Surely, faire ladies, there is no man in y world, which doth not desire and reuerence nobilitie of bloud, that exalteth those that possesse it, euen vnto the cloudes. Yet will I not recount vnto you from point to point, all that may be said in fauour thereof. Wherefore it is nowe high time, that I drawe neere the matter, and

ATREATISE

that I bring this my discourse to certaine true effectes. And surely in a fewe wordes, I may conclude, that he being Noble, who is borne of Noble Parentes, as I said; there neede not be anie doubt whether the ring giuen by the noble Ladie, belongeth to any other then my selfe, who am the most Noble. My auncestors *Fabricio*, were of no base house, I am not descended of any obscure parentage: but contrarily, there are manie ages that their renowne hath shined amongst men, & there is none of you that is ignorant therof, for there are alreadie manie yeares passed, wherein they haue exposed themselues to do their princes seruice. Ought the aid that they haue continuallie yeelded them, be of no account? Inasmuch as they haue valiantly fought against their enemies, and couragiously opposed themselves against all hazardous daungers, not flying from any labours in the world.

They haue not made anie accompt, neyther of heate nor colde, nor of all the incumbrances, which did crosse them: and we are not ignoraunt how manie troublesome broyles they haue freed our Citie from, and what assistance they haue yeelded thereunto. Which the ornamentes of their victories doe sufficiently declare, which may be seene in manie places of the citie: I could (if there were anie such necessitie therein, as there is not) shewe you many auncient priuiledges which they haue receiued of auncient kings, by which it may easily be perceiued of what estimation they haue been, and whether they were reputed amongst noble men or not. I forbear to speake of the armories of our house, in the which there is no figure, nor marke, which hath not been graunted by some king or other. What wilt thou that I say farther? truly it is irkesome to me to reckon vp any more.

Thou

Thou seest what matter I might bring in on the behalfe of Nobilitie, and worthinesse of my auncestors, albeit that I haue to day alleadged as it were nothing at all. This is the principall part of Nobilitie, to be able before men at large to display the famous prowesses of his auncestors, whose glorie and renowne, to the ende that it may liue eternallie, doth remaine in their posteritie. Wherehence I might rightly affirme, that all their honour, glorie, magnificence, and nobilitie resteth in me. And to conclude, I may tearme my selfe as a part of those noble personages, from whom so great Nobilitie is proceeded.

In my countenance appeareth their honourable lookes, and all their glorie, as in him who is their lawfull heire; shineth in me. This is then that kind of Nobilitie, which amongst men causeth a man to be renowned and honourable: albeit there is another sort of Nobilitie (as some will haue it) of so great power, that although a man be not descended of noble bloud, yet doth it notwithstanding cause him to be esteemed honourable. And that is it (worthie companie) (as I thinke) wheron *Fabricio*, when hee will indeuour his best to speake what hee can for his Nobilitie, will most of all extend his discourse vpon: for he will haue no other prop nor staie, to keepe himselfe on foote, I meane, that hee will wholly rest himselfe vpon learning, and therewithall make his resistance. Wherefore it shall not be from the purpose, vnto that which I haue spoken, to adde these fewe wordes, by the which I doubt not, that without any great trouble vnto you, but that I shall shewe you, what Nobilitie learning can bring vnto man, when I shall haue set downe what I shall thinke thereof: which, it may bee, shall not be farre out of the waye, and you may iudge

A TREATISE

howe greatly *Fabricio* shall be deceiued.

I say then (worthie companie) that not onely hee is a noble man (as some doe belecue) who draweth his beginning from a noble stocke, as by that I haue already discourted you may haue vnderstood: but likewise he is esteemed amongst noble men, who albeit hee be not descended of noble blood, yet giuing himselfe vnto learning, doth gaine some credite and reputation amongst men. And this kind of Nobilitie (if notwithstanding we ought to tearme it so) certainly is recommended, as a thing no lesse good then laudable: but I doe flatly denie, that they doe attaine to perfit Nobilitie, except they receiue therewith this Nobilitie of blood. Yet I will say, and it may be it is not farre from the trueth, that learning is rather an ornament of Nobilitie then cause thereof. And will say more, according vnto my opinion, that it giueth a certaine facilitie, or rather a beginning vnto man, to become honourable, but it doth not indeede make him noble, as peraduenture *Fabricio*, thou diddest perswade thy selfe.

Forasmuch as if in anie matter wee consider learning meerely in it selfe, without anie other qualitie, or ornament that is required in Nobilitie, we shall finde that it doth not make him honourable, that possesseth it, but hee shall be like vnto a faire pretious stone, set in the midst of some base and vile mettall: and like as a small candle doth giue but a slender light vnto those that beholde it (I say verie small) in regarde of a great Torche: So doth this kinde of Nobilitie shine, in regarde of that other which I lately spoke of.

And be not thou ouer hard of beliefe heerein, for I shall very easily prooue this vnto thee. Imagine
such

such a one in thy mind, who is graced with good manners, learning and knowledge, but in bad apparell, as there are many such; and likewise another, void of learning, but in braue attire fit for a gentleman, and that they be both vnknowne vnto thee: what answer wouldest thou make, if my selfe or any other should demand of thee, which of these two were a gentleman? Surelie as I thinke, thou wouldest say the last of them, and whosoeuer hath any sound iudgement would not thinke otherwise; and this proceedeth of the insufficiencie of learning: for as I haue said vnto you, it is not of it selfe sufficient, at one instant to bring forth the effects of nobilitie.

I say then that there wanteth somewhat else, and it is riches, which are an ornament, or rather a part of nobilitie, which if thou dost conioine with learning, it may be that then I will beleue that he that possesseth both, is become noble; for then two causes doe concur together, neither of the which of themselves, would bee sufficient. He then that wil be accounted noble, ought aboue al things especially to abound in wealth. O how many learned men haue I knowne in my time, whoe contemning these goods (for so are they rightlie called) haue beene, and are yet vilely despised themselves. Dost thou thinke *Fabricio*, that now I tell thee troth? Now I can but imagine what courage thou canst haue, seeing the ground more and more to sinke vnder thy feet, vvhath leaning stocke wilt thou haue, when as that vvhereon thy mind did most of all settle it selfe (following thy false opinion) doth least of all serue thy turne? Learning will not much helpe thee, wherefore thou mayest boldlie put thy trust in somewhat else; for in thee there is no nobilitie at all to be considered. Yet to the end that thy hart may not bee overcharged vvith

A TREATISE

melancholie, I will grant thee thus much, that thou art become noble thorough learning, which being supposed as true, arguing in this sort, I may saie vnto thee. It is a matter manifest which can in no sort be denied, that dame Nature doth both in dignitie and perfection, far surpasse industrious art, seeing it doth onely in the operation thereof force it selfe, to imitate nature. Now this sort of nobilitie, which thou wouldst haue in thy selfe, is not naturall, but artificiall, bicause as I haue saide vnto thee, thou art not noble by nature, but ennobled by the exercise of learning, and so consequentlie noble by Art.

But yet this is not sufficient *Fabricio*, I will yeelde thee many other reasons, to shew thee that I am more noble than thou art, although that there were Nobilitie in thee. Thou canst not in any sort denie mee, that as often as two equall thinges doe striue together, but that all honour and reuerence is attributed to the most ancient: if then both of vs be noble, as I haue alreadie granted thee, and doe againe yeeld thee, ought not I to be adiudged more noble, as hee which descendeth of more ancient nobilitie, or contrarilie thy selfe, who art but an vpstart Gentleman?

Surely if thou leanest vnto the truth, thou canst not say otherwise. But God knoweth what occasion thou hast now to reioice, seeing that without taking any further paines, I haue granted thee that thou art a Noble man: alas, I beleue this thy mirth will be but small, being intermingled with so great sorrow. So that not onelie the ground will faile vnder thy feet, but likewise the breath in thy mouth, nothing remaining for thee hereafter to say.

Thou shalt see that indeed hereafter quoth *Fabricio*,
(taking the speech vpon him with a good grace, stretching

ching forth and wagging his right hand at *Possidonio*, in a mocking maner) yea thou shalt well perceiue whether the breath will faile in my mouth, as thou saiest: for y^e shalt wel feele of what force those new fables are, which thou hast this day set to sale in fauour of this thy nobilitie; and shouldest yer this haue well perceiued it, if it had beene lawfull for me to answere thy arguments as I am well furnished with matter.

Thou canst doe no lesse, quoth *Possidonio*, with a smiling countenance, then cal them new fables, seeing that they doe so newly torment thee: but thou shalt finde them true histories against thy selfe.

Fabricio replied I know not what, at which instant the lady *Aurelia*, graced with beautie, and the guifts of nature, vwho vntill that time had attentiuely noted and passed vnder silence the wordes of *Possidonio*, turning hir selfe towards him, with a womans veice saide thus vnto him.

Holding this thy last conclusion as true *Possidonio*, to wit, that honor & victory ought to be giue to the most ancient, I would gladly vnderstand, if the same question which is this day betweene you two, did happen between 2. yong men equal in Nobilitie of bloud, to whether of the two thou wouldst giue the price & victory?

Mary to him Madam (quoth *Possidonio*) whose Nobility as I lately saide, were most ancient.

To which she replied, but how wilt thou know, whether of the two were more ancient, for that seemeth a hard matter for me to discerne?

Madam (quoth *Possidonio*) it is a verie easie thing: for therein we ought to followe the common opinion of men of the country, when y^e same cannot otherwise be determined by priuiledges, or other lawfull meanes.

M. Peter *Anthony* added hereunto. Many yeares agoe

A TREATISE

agoe, Madam, sentence is giuen in determination of that which you doe demand; and as I thinke not onlie your ladiſhip, but all that are heere preſent haue read thereof.

Whereunto the lady *Aurelia* ſaid. We neuer ſtudi- ed theſe your diſputations, which in regarde that wee are women, are as farre vnmeet for vs, as the handling of vveapons.

M. *Peter Anthony* replied, I doe not ſpeake from the purpoſe Madam. I ſay that many yeares ſince, a que- ſtion fell out betweene two noble young men of *Flo- rence*, to wit; vvhether of them vvas the better Gen- tleman, and of more ancient nobilitie in that citie: of the which, as euery man vvas affected, ſome men did prefer the one of them, ſome the other: Finally, it was adiudged that the *Baroneſi* (of vvhich houſe one of the Gentlemen were) vvere the moſt ancient gentlemen, not onely in *Florence*, but in all the world.

And how may that be credited (quoth the lady *Au- relia*) or concluded by any firme argument?

Mary, quoth he, it vvas confirmed with a moſt for- cible reaſon. For ſomuch as all they vvho were iſſued of the bloud of the *Baroneſi*, ſome of them had a very long & thin face, others extreemly broad, ſome a long noſe, others very ſhort; this man one eie greater then his fellowe, that other one eie lower ſet then another, & beſides al this, their bodies very deformed, in reſpect of other men. Which thing gaue the iudge good cauſe to thinke, that they vvere made by nature in that ſea- ſon, vvhen ſhee began firſt to frame men, and ſo they vvere the moſt ancient, and moſt noble: vvheras other men vvere made, when as ſhe knew better how to fa- ſhion them; who being not ſo ancient, were not con- ſequentlie ſo Noble. So that Madame, if you deſire of

two yong men, or of many, to know which of them is the most noble, look which of them is most deformed, for he is surely descended of the most ancient stock, and so the most noble.

Truelie novv I remember (quoth the lady *Aurelia*) to haue read the storie as you report it.

This nev and vvitty argument of nobilitie, with the good vvitt of the iudge, was vvith a pleasant laughter recommended of the vvhole companie, vvich vvhen it was ceased, *Possidonio* began againe thus to followe on his discourse.

Seeing that my tales are of no force, as *Fabricio* lately saide, I know not truely hovv I should perswade my selfe, vppon what hee will laie any foundation, on the which he may take rest, nor with what reasons he shal be able to vphold himselfe: in asmuch as if we speak of bloud, he cannot compare with me; as a thing hee neuer came neere, as he will freelic confesse vnto me: if of learning, I will not begin againe to discourse any more therof: for I haue franklie spoken thereof what I think, and you may iudge as vvell as my selfe, whether it maketh for him, or not. It may be he groundeth himselfe vpon riches. Surely it should be an open follie to think so, much more to speake it. If then hee bee not to bee compared vnto mee, neither in bloud, nor in riches; from which two things, true and perfect nobilitie doth spring: and if learning bee of no moment in matter of Nobilitie; it may well appeare howe his iudgement is more then deceiued, and his will more then obstinate. And to the end that none of my reasons may goe without due prooffe; I will make this manifest vnto you likewise, to wit, that I surpasse him as farre in riches, as in Nobilitie of bloud, as I haue heeretofore concluded. Which of you gentlemen, are ignorant, that if the least

A TREATISE

part of my wealth were set on the one side, and all that he hath heaped on the other, that mine would not farre exceede the value of his? which I doubt not but you will iudge superfluous for me to declare, beeing a matter cleere inough of it selfe. Yet seeing we are entered therein I wil not forbear to speake thereof.

Consider then (worthy Gentlemen) that if the great wealth and substance which is so much desired of mortal men, be not vvholie vnited in me, yet at y least I possesse the greater part of it. For if vve talke of state-lie Palaces, I am owner of such as cause those that doe behold them to wonder, and they are especiallie furnished with rich and pretious stufte. If of pleasant Gardens, I haue many of them, which doe abound in all that which is beautifull to the eie, and delightfull to behold. I will not reckon vp vnto you, the fruitfull fields, nor the shadowvy woods, from the which al that which is necessarie for the life of man, may bee gathered; for thanks be to God, I haue sufficient store of them: lesse will I tel you what flocks of sheep I possesse: for it may be if I should speake of them to others, I should not bee beleueed. I will likewise forbear to declare of the gold and siluer, vvhich is alwaies in my tresorie: & finally I refuse to speake of many other particularities, vvhich my selfe am ashamed to rehearse, and that bicause they are as well knowvn to your selues, as to me. I thinke it likewise very superfluous, to open vnto you, what great feasts, rich apparell, pompe, chiuallry, musicke, songes, and al other manner of pleasures, sports, and feastings, which matters are nolesse necessary then honorable, to personages truly honorable, as things vvhich do of themselves, shew themselves, and are wel knowne of you to be continuallie obserued by me. Now to the ende you may iudge aright, you ought to consider, what & how
great

great, *Fabricio* his vvealth is.

Scarce had *Possidonio* giuen ende to the sound of his last words, when as *Fabricio* moderately and suddenlie smiling, I knowv not vwhereat, and afterwardes shaking of his head, he spake in this sort.

Truely *Possidonio*, thou dost this day lay a great burthen vppon thy shoulders; if thou doost vndertake to shew others my wealth or goods (as thou termest the) forsomuch as not only that final time of the day which remaineth, no not a vvhole day would be sufficient to reckon them vp. Wherefore passe on further, and toile not thy selfe about that, thou needest take no care for: for if thou wilt, I wil yeeld vnto thee, not only that thou art rich aboue any other, but that al the riches of the world be in thy possession.

I am very certaine *Fabricio*, (quoth *Possidonio*) that the troth doth force thee to grant it me. Wherefore this my proposition gent. is true, that I doe not onely farre surpasse him in bloud, but in riches likewise. And now vvilt thou yet haue the heart to vndertake to shevve vs y thy Nobilitie is greater? For I possessing al the ornamentes that are to be desired of mortal men, I cannot be perswaded, that thou hast any courage left to speake any more therof. Wherefore it would wel become thee to hold thy peace, and to yeeld, that thy reasons which are of no force may giue place to mine. It were then best for thee, not to charge so heauy a burthen vpon so vveake shoulders, for hauing to day without varying from the troth, alleadged so many vvorthy & excellent deeds of my ancestors, & made account of such great abundance of riches, wherhence the perfection of Nobility doth spring, I would but know vvhat thou hast to say? It may be thou wilt inform vs of the braue combats and valiant battels of thy ancestors? Or shew vs vvhat

A TREATISE

faire palaces & plesant gardens thou hast? Wherefore if as thou deemst thou hast any sound iudgment in thee, indure not any more that this matter bee further discovered; but hence forward pronounce that sentence against thy selfe, which we attend from the iudge: which being said, he paused a little, and then followed on his discourse in this sort.

I would here end my discourse, faire Ladies, were it not that I haue yet to say, that riches are an ornament and part of nobilitie, which if it were not a trouble vnto you, I would most willingly proue.

It cannot be troublesome vnto vs (quoth one of the Gent.) casting vp his eies to the skie, seeing that the sunne is as yet about the tops of the trees. This answer pleased likewise the rest of the company, to the end *Possidonio* might follow on his discourse; wherefore taking the speech vpon him, he continued in this manner.

Ought not we, gentlemen, to esteeme of the grace and ornament which riches do bring to Nobility? Vnto the which it hapneth like as to a garden, which besides all other dainties, is bewtified with diuers flowers which nature doth bring forth: which ornament the night by the darkenesse thereof dooth hinder: nay it perswade th sometimes, that it is rather an obscure valley then a garden, and yet doth it stil remaine the same: it is then the cleerenesse of the day that maketh it shew faire and ioyfull. Euen the very same may be said of riches: For if a man who is issued of noble bloud & high discent, wanteth them, it wholly darkneth the sunshine of his nobilitie: whence it proceedeth that hee is no more accounted noble, but one of the vulgar sort. We will then affirme, that riches necessarilie are the cause of all ornament of nobilitie.

And

And this needeth not to seeme straunge vnto you, for experience (from whence wee take all this assurance) may make vs full certaine thereof: For if wee consider al those that are borne of any worthy family (and alas I am greeued to thinke thereon) surely wee shall finde manie of them, who are constrained (to maintain life and soule together as they say) to plough the ground, or otherwise forced thorough contemptible pouertie, to serue other men, or els to auoid miserie, against their willes, to take some other vnfit calling vpon them. And any man may of himselfe iudge the generall occasion, of so insupportable a mischiese, which proceedeth from no other cause then for want of riches. But this euill should seeme but of small moment, if it were not cause of a farre greater: Seeing that from thence doth spring blemish in bloud, diminishing of renowne, increase of infamie, a generall dishonor of a mans house, and finally not only losse of Nobilitie, but therewithall of life it selfe. Who wil afterwards presume anie more to call such a one by the title of a gentleman? Such a one I say, who for want of wealth and riches, hath derogated from Nobilitie, in vsing some base trade and vocation? But what shall I say more, he becommeth thereby in the end the fable of the world, and as a miserable wretch, is pointed at by the common sort, and made a laughing stocke. Doth it seeme vnto thee *Fabricio*, that these thinges are worthy to be accompted of? surely no, but they are rather to be preferred before a mans owne life. And this I onely speake in that which concerneth the commoditie of priuate persons: but what shall I say of generall or publicke estates? wherof we see at this day so many goe to ruine, for there are verie few commonwealthes, or communalties, as we do terme them, which do not for want of that which is

A TREATISE

necessarie, sincke to the ground on euery side. Howe manie Palaces, howe many Churches, howe manie Cities, doe there dayly fall to the ground, as ruinous, which because the estate of men cannot sustaine them, cannot be vpheld? What shall I say of this king, or of that Prince, who being not of abilitie to resist the force of the enemy that assaileth them, for want of supply of money, do leese their kingdomes, their powers, and their crowne? you should not heare of so manie ouerthrowes, you should not see so many slaughters: neyther shoulde you round about, you feele so manie cruell actes, if they did abound in wealth: you may then henceforth iudge, whether riches be an ornament, and part of Nobilitie, or not? And like as when they faile, they are cause of great inconueniences (yea of more then I haue this day acquainted you withal) So likewise where they abound, they doe bring with them honour, and glory: For therof first of all doth arise a glorie farre exceeding al other, as that which proceedeth of liberalitie, which likewise giueth as great renowne and honour to a gentleman, as can possible be spoken of. And who is so ignorant that knoweth not, y without wealth such a glorie of liberalitie, cannot shew forth it selfe, as doth issue there from? Surely all men may wel perceiue it. Doe not the ancient stocke and families, conserue themselves in their nobilitie, by meanes of riches? doth not the nobilitie of y man extend it selfe the more, who doth liberally giue helpe to his friends, or to any other that hath need of succour? doth not their nobilitie increase, with their lordlike garments, their great & rich banquets, their great number of seruauntes, their faire horses, their pleasant gardens, and such other thinges? Thou canst not deny this *Fabricio*. Now tell me what man is he that can easily effect these thinges, if he want wealth?

wealth? Surely it is a thing not to be beleueed. Riches do driue all sadnes and sorrow from the mind: they expell all melancholic thoughtes from the imagination: they keepe the bodie from wearisome labour: they increase sweete friendship: they cause in man waighers of honor and renowne, and finally they are the occasion of all high fame and glorie. Who is he then so void of reason, who hearing these things so conformable vnto trueth, doth not iudge riches, not onely to be an ornament of Nobilitie, but an inseparable part thereof? Which thing you may the better consider, by that which experience teacheth, seeing that no man can mount vp to anie degree of vertue, or nobilitie, but riches must open the gap, and make the way. Who will denie, but that it had been impossible for so manie noble men and knights, as we daily see, to haue made any entry to vertue & nobility, but by their riches, much lesse to haue euer come either to y^e end, or midst thereof? O how many fine wits, & men of great vnderstanding haue there been, & are yet in the world, who employing their whole study in matters belonging to their house (which they would not haue done, but haue takē another course, if they had wherewithal to maintain the selues) who haue ended their liues miserably, whereas nature had made them apt, & fit, to learn some worthy vertue! If then riches are the beginning, & the middle of euerie laudable action, as I haue plainly made demonstration: it followeth necessarily, that this nobility which is conioyned with wealth, is y^e soueraigne good, & consequently that he who is indued with this nobilitie, is chiefly noble: now *Fabricio*, as I haue shewed heeretofore, being depriued heereof, his Nobilitie whatsoeuer it is, is lame and faultie, and consequently, is not true nor absolute. But I will not nowe further enlarge my speech on his subiect, least in the

A TREATISE

end I should seeme troublesome vnto you : in as much as it is a matter more then manifest, that riches doe stead a man more in nobilitie, then I am able to speake of. Wherefore in few wordes to end my discourse, and bring it to the last conclusion, it may clearely appeare vnto you, that true and perfit nobilitie doth consist in bloud, and riches : which seeing it is so, as I haue with no lesse strong then true reasons prooued a great while: it followeth that I am true, and perfectly noble, as one in whom, all those partes are sufficiently assembled, and consequently the ring giuen, doth belong vnto me, as to the most noble.

Possidonio hauing spoken in this maner, turned himselfe towardes *Nennio*, proceeding farther in this wise.

Thou canst not, *Nennio*, be of any other opinion: for thou knowest well what is fit to be done, and hast alwaies been pleased to followe the steps of a iust Iudge, albeit there needed not a man of that wisdom to decide this question (if any doubt ought to be made thereof) being of it selfe most apparant, and out of all doubt : for it had been an easie matter for a man of a slender capacitie, to decide this controuersie, especially hauing vnderstoode so manie reasons as haue been alleadged by me. Amongst the which (that I may now come to a finall conclusion) I remember yet this one; I consider her estate from whom this variance did arise, to be noble, as is not vnknowne vnto you: I weigh likewise, that her gift is pretious, rich, and worthy a noble man. Finally, I regard the wordes shee vttered in giuing it; her will being, that in remembrance of her; the most noble of vs two should possesse it. What occasion should moue her to giue it vnto the most Noble? Surely no other, but that shee was honourable.

and

and the present likewise fit for a person honourable: I being then descended of a most noble stocke, and hauing all the partes which are required in a perfect noble man, and the same qualities being in her, it remaineth, that the rich iewell be giuen vnto me, and not to him who is not worthy of such a present. What contentment should she receiue, being a ladie of great honour, if one that were inferiour to her in calling, should remember her? Truely none at all; because her will (agreeable vnto reason) was that she should be had in remembrance of a man of worth and of honor. Let *Fabricio* then leaue the pursuite thereof, and not suffer any more wordes to be made of the matter, nor stay (if he regard his credite) vntill sentence be giuen: for I doe certainly assure you, that if the gracious, and gentle ladie *Virginia*, had giuen the ring vnto the most vnworthy, as shee gaue it to the most noble of vs both (which was neuer her intent) I would without any contradiction haue yeelded it vnto him, and without anie maner of question with mine owne hands, would haue hanged the same about his necke. Let him not then be obstinate, or opiniatiue, to debate the matter when there is no cause, especiallie when nothing els then detriment, and shame can redound thereof. I will now *Nennio*, make an end of my speech, and leaue the matter wholly in your handes, being certaine that you will determine thereof in such sort, as shalbe conformable vnto Iustice, and that you will in no wise oppose your selfe against the will of the noble ladie.

Here *Possidonio* ended his discourse, which he continued all the while the sunne did shew vpon the earth, vntill the euening: Wherefore wee being risen from our places, with a generall consent we referred *Fabricio*

H.

his

A TREATISE

his discourse vntill the next day, both because time would not haue sufficed, and it would likewise haue been ouer troublesome vnto vs, by reason of *Possidonio* his long speech.

Thus we cōming forth of y^e garden, some of the yong gentlemen and ladies, did highly commend that which *Possidonio* had related vnto vs. But whether he had spoken wel or no, we being entred into the house, our horses (according to our dayly custome) were presently made readie. And we being mounted on them, two of our seruantes amongst y^e rest, went along with vs: of the which one of them led two grayhoundes, and two branches in his hand, and the other carried a faulcon: as we were vpon the way, we had not rid past a mile, before we had viewe of a young phesant which did flie somewhat aloft: At the which letting the faulcon flie, extending her winges in the ayre, she wrought so high a pitch, y^e you would haue thought she had touched y^e skie, and as she made her point to stoupe, her head towards the earth, and her traine towards the skie, the phesant tooke a thicke hedge for couert, which was the cause that the faulcon leeing the sight thereof, seemed as it were ashamed thereat. Immediatly one of the young men, let flie another faulcon, which hee carried on his fist, hauing first sprung the phesant from her couert, which as one afraid had not made any great flight, but the faulcon presently seized on it. In the meane time whilest we continued this hawking, the two grayhoundes, which followed vs were let run at two hares, and as we gallopped after, they being spent, yeelded to the mercie of the dogges. Wherefore comming to their succour, as well contented with our prey, we returned home, because supper time drew neere.

After that wee had a little taken breath, wee set our selues

selues to supper with great delight, vnder the fresh shadowe: which being ended, the garden being faire, delightfull, and pleasant, there was not one of vs that was minded to depart from thence. Wherefore, some of vs being risen from the table, went to sport our selues in the allies: Others sitting still, plaied at chesse, and at tables, so long as they were permitted by day light. Afterwards, we sate all together on the thin grasse, which was verie coole, passing the time in pleasant and merrie talke, vntil it seemed a fit houre to go to bed. Wherefore euerie one rising, went to take his ordinarie rest.



1900

11. 2.

The second Booke.



He ancient Poets by their fables doe sette down, that *Iupiter* being at the mariage of *Peleas* inuited all the Gods and goddeses thither, except *Eris* the goddesse of discord; whereat she being grieuously offended, with great industrie she framed y golden apple, and disdain-

fullie threw it on the table, where *Pallas*, *Iuno*, and *Venus* were set, round about the which was written, Let this braue and rich apple be giuen to the fairest. From hence (because each of the goddeses did deeme herselfe, to be both faire and gracious) did arise a sudden quarrell. *Iupiter* would not determine which of them should haue this guift, the one being both his sister and his wife, the other two his daughters: but sent them to receiue their iudgement of *Paris* the sonne of *Priam*, who to the end he might giue a right sentence, gaue commandement that they should seuerally the one after the other, present themselves naked before him. *Pallas* shewing hir selfe, promised him that if hee did iudge that she was the fairest; she would make him the onely famous man for learning in the world: *Iuno*, the most rich: and *Venus* offered him the enioying of the fairest ladie in the world: in regard of which promise,

A TREATISE

he gaue hir the golden apple, from whence afterwards did proceed the destruction of Troy.

Now let vs consider what fruit may be gathered by the shadowe of fables, especially of this which I euen now recited. For indeed vnder those vailes we may receiue no lesse pleasant then profitable instruction. For somuch as by this fiction, the Poets doe meane this, that in the procreation of man, the celestiaall bodies do meet together, and according to their diuers powers, doe diuersly bring forth sundry effectes in our bodies. Into the which discord doth not enter, least the bodie alreadie created should wholie perish.

Howbeit after that man is once framed, and that he hath attained to that age, that hee beginneth nowe to discourse within himselfe, what kinde of life hee were best to follooue as the most noble in account amongst men: whether that which is grounded vppon knowledge, which the Philosophers were wont to cal a contemplatiue kind of life: or otherwise, y^e which guideth a man that addicteth himself only to worldly matters, which they rearme actiue: or else that which consisteth wholly in pleasure, which they name delightfull. Then straightwaie discord entreth: of which three sortes of liues, Soueraine Iupiter will not giue sentence which is the best, least that in approuing the one, he should condemne the other two; and so the life of man should rather be constrained then free, but hee leaueth them to the iudgement of man, to the end that he may as pleaseth him, tie himselfe to that kind of life that shall best like him; it may be, shewing vs thereby, the free choice which is granted to vs by him. Of the which notwithstanding he that is caried away to follow the delightfull kind of life, doth bring vnto him selfe vnspeakeable detriment. If then a man in his young yeares, did enter in-

to

to consideration of these three manner of liues, and by reason did discourse which of them were the most noble, and did tie himselfe thereto : I doubt not, in that small number of yeares we haue to liue, but we should take a farre better course, and that the life of mortall men should be more pleasing & accepted before God, and more settled and prosperous for men : wheras now we see the greater part, to sinke and drowne themselves, making choice of that which is worst.

For if we enter into a generall consideration of all men liuing, truelie we shall finde the number of those to be verie small, who followe the contemplatiue life, as more noble then the other; but very manie who with an ardent desire do embrace, either the actiue, or delightful : which two are so much lesse vworthy then the other as the body is lesse noble then the minde. Of vvhich two partes nature hath framed man, the one being subiect to corruption, the other eternallie durable.

These kind of men see not (as hauing their inward eies vailed) how much more worthy desert it is, to followe those thinges that are incorruptible, then in vain to labour after the pleasure of the flesh, which is but (as it were) of a daies continuance. For vvhich cause, the custome of those that liue in that sort, is greatly to be blamed, seeing that man doth wholie take delight in those thinges (as if it were a naturall matter) which bring him intollerable losse, albeit at the first shew they seeme pleasant and delightfull to the body.

VVhich opinion *Possidonio* did wholly leane vnto yesterday, for grounding himselfe vppon those two kinds of life, he did sufficiently set forth the sweetnesse that is felte in them . But *Fabricio*, farre differing from him in iudgement, vvill this daye endeavour him-

A TREATISE

himselfe to shew, that the contrarie therof is the troth, as he who following a contemplatiue kind of life, doth hold this as most certaine, that true and perfect nobilitie, doth consist in the vertues of the minde. But to the ende that I seeme not my selfe, to speake that for him, which he determineth to relate, I intend hencefoorth to giue place to his ovne words.

Euery starre was now hidden in the skie, fearing the cleere light which the sunne did more and more spread vpon the earth, vwhen as vve being risen to exercise our bodies, we mounted on horsebacke to take the freshe ayre, and as our discourse led vs from one matter to another, in the end we perceiued that vve had rid further then we determined: wherefore turning back, wee passed softly homeward; where the tables were couered for dinner: and after wee had first walked a turn or two in the garden, in the end we placed our selues at the table: and after that wee had satisfied hunger, and sate a while, we marched to that place where *Possidonio* discoursed the day before, to heare what *Fabricio* had this day to speake for himselfe, who beeing fresh and lustie hauing called vs al together, we compassed him round about. And when he perceiued we vv ere all in a readinesse, and that we were silent, he gaue with great courage, this beginning vnto his speech.

Most worthy gentlemen, Silence should (in my opinion) hereafter better become me, if I would regarde the words which *Possidonio* vttered yesterday, both at the beginning and likewise at the end of his long genealogie; or else it were best for me to seeke some matter more doubtfull then that hee discoursed of. Vvhich I vvould willingly doe, if he had made shew of his ovne Nobilitie, and not other mens: or spoken of any thing else, then of the greatnesse of his statelie palaces, and of the

the aboundance of his great wealth. Wherefore to the end I may declare vnto you, how far forth these things make for Nobilitie; nay rather howe farre they are opposite, and cleane contrarie thereunto: I had not need to be dumbe to day: but I will rather speake that (without passing the limited bounds) which shall come first into my thought, and I shall iudge to be true: and, as I thinke, I shal perchance open those thinges vnto you, which it may be, were neuer vttered by any other, concerning true, and perfect Nobilitie.

Now our question being strange, and no man (as I belecue) hauing so perfectlie discoursed thereof, I hope you will giue attentiu eare vnto me: which, if you doe (as I doubt not but you will) strength will settle in my heart, from the which my minde will take encouragement, my memory be constant, my will more readie, & my voice more apt to speake.

The cleernesse of *Possidonio* his bloud (worthy gentlemen) is so great, by that which hee hath in many words long debated, that considering vvhich is y most noble of vs tivo, there is no doubt, but he is more worthy than my selfe, and that our controuersie, is rather superfluous, then necessary. But forsomuch as vndoubtedlie I hold the question to be superfluous and out of doubt, as this is, vvhether a resonable creature be more noble then a brute beast, or a man more noble; & more perfect then God: I will not forbear to declare vnto you how weake his vveapons are, and to shevve you plainly the slighnesse of his words, that you may know by degrees, into vvhhat manifest error he is vnadvisedlie fallen. Wherefore it lying vppon me this daie to persuade you, that true and perfect Nobilitie in man consisteth not in bloud (for it should bee a meere follie to thinke it, much more to speake it) but in the mind, and

A TREATISE

consequentlie that this nobilitie which consisteth in me, because it proceedeth from the minde, is true and perfect; it were first expedient for me to alleadge some of my reasons, and afterwarde in answering his arguments, to rid my selfe cleane from them. But you shall holde me excused if I take a contrary course, for vpon good ground I wil first of all begin with the last, that I may the sooner dispatch the matter, and afterwards by sound argumentes strengthen my side the more.

Possidonio yesterday, by the conclusion of his discourse intended, that true and perfect nobilitie is deriued from bloud, and riches, and for the sure grounding of this his conclusion, in arguing he let fly many dartes and arrowes, with which he had thought to haue giuen me my deathes wound: but surely they were all so weake, that with one onely blow (if so it vvere that I intended not particularlie to answer to euerie point) you shall see the fal presentlie to y ground: yea some of them will sharpely pierce himselfe, as by his first argument I will manifestly proue vnto you.

For in the verie entry of his discourse, hee going about to shew what this Nobilitie is; he affirmed, that that was true nobilitie, which is left by the auncestors to the successours: and going about to prooue that hee was noble, hee saide, that his predecessours had beene braue and valiant men at Armes, and vvell thought of, of the kinges whom they had serued: but I hearde no word that they themselues were descended of any noble stocke (whereby if you doe well weigh the matter) you may perceiue the vncertainty of his speech: forso-much as he did then affirme, the nobility of his auncestors to consist, not in bloud as hee said, but in actes of magnanimitie, and in vertue, which is easie to bee credited, as that which proceedeth from the vertues of the
mind.

mind. I say it is a foolish thinge to hold, that nobilitie is left vs by our ancestors, for if that were true, it should necessarilie followe, either that we should be all noble, or else not one at all; seeing that in perfect nobilitie, if we ought to haue consideration of bloud, as thou saiest *Possidonio*, we shall surely finde (if we doe not flie from the true opinion of Naturalistes, and doe giue credit to that which is approued) that one man onely vvas the common predecessor of all men which haue bin born, vntill this day, and are hereafter to come into y^e vworld, whose name vvas Adam.

I reason then thus (if so be that thy opinion dooth hold any thing of the troth) that if Adam was noble, why then vve are all noble, as all they shal bee likewise who are to come into the world: but if hee were ignoble, and base, we are so likewise, and so by consequent, I am in like estate of nobilitie, or basenesse of birth, as thou art. For euen as the paine of his offence, vvhich was death, extendeth it selfe euen vnto vs, and shall likewise stretch to as many as euer shall be borne hereafter; euen so in like manner, his nobilitie, or basenesse, ought to extend it selfe to all his posteritie. Dooft thou thinke *Possidonio* that this is a good consequent? Surely I beleeeue so.

Wherefore novv thou mayst perceiue, how much nature, whereon yesterday thou diddest ground thy self for the most part, dooth make for this thy nobilitie; in asmuch as it hath brought vs al into the world after one sort, and there is no distinction at all in nature; whereof (if I doe call it to minde before I haue ended my discourse) I will speake somewhat, but now let vs proceed further.

How true is this other reason, that nobilitie is lefte as an hereditarie guift? Surely, when as I do enter
 I 2 into

ATREATISE

into imagination of such foolish toyes, I cannot holde my selfe from laughter. For who is there amongst you that did euer see, that Nobilitie was lefte by will vnto mens children, as though it were framed of some materiall thing, which might by the last testament be left vnto them, as riches are, which is surely a ridiculous thing? Neither is it of that qualitie as other thinges are, which albeit they be not palpable, yet are they left vnto vs as hereditarie: and surely thou mayest seeke long enough in thy grandfathers willes, before thou shouldest be able to finde any such Nobilitie left thee by any of them.

Of what power this thy other argument (wherin y intendest, that no better instrument, nor more perfect meanes is giuen vs by nature, by which the nobility of man is long conserued, then children and such as doe descend of them) is sufficiently manifest of it selfe. For if that did proceed according vnto troth: why diddest thou then set the two *Scipios* as an example vnto vs? vvhatis nowv become of their posteritie? where are their successors? Surely they are already cleane worne out.

But forsomuch as their nobilitie did not consist in bloud, but in the vertues of the minde, therefore their glorious worthinesse and lawdable renowme is not dead, nor will neuer be extinguished in their posterity. Howv many are there who are dead without children, vvhose glory and renowme dooth neuerthelesse liue vntill this day? I cannot reckon vp the great number of them. We ought not then to consider in true Nobilitie, as thou sayst, eyther the predecessors or successors, but only the vertue of man, vvhich causeth him to liue eternally, as we may wel say of the *Scipios*, & other worthy emperors.

Now

Now in proceeding farther, thou wentest about to prooue, that in considering the operations of Nature, that like as the blood is infused in the birth of children, euen so is nobilitie. Of what waight that is, I leaue thee to consider, as a matter that hath not trueth in it: from whence that which hath been said alreadie, may be againe auerred, to wit, that wee being all descended of *Adam* our first father, if his blood was noble, this his nobilitie was by him infused into al his children, and so from hand to hand into all his posteritie. Thou diddest adde hereunto, that we doe not only regard the blood, but the countenances and lineaments of the parentes in their children.

In trueth I cannot imagine to what purpose thou doest vtter so many wordes in vaine. For albeit this be true, that the verie countenance and lineaments of the auncestors remaine with their posteritie: doth that prooue their Nobilitie, and greatnesse of courage? No truely: For it consisteth in the vertues of the mind, whither the sight of our outward eies cannot pierce, and not in the lineamentes of the bodie, except you will say that one member is more noble then the other, which question at this time we are not to dispute of. Thou wentest about to make vs beleeue likewise, that not onely the members, but euen the maners, and the prowesse of parentes, most commonly is transfused into the children. Surely *Possidonio*, I affirme that those are noble, who doe follow the good partes, and generositie of their auncestors, as the *Scipios* did, which may serue as the onely example in the world for vertue and value. But we doe not esteeme those to be noble, who descending of true and perfit noble men, doe leade a loose and wicked life: As afterwards the sonne of *Scipio* of *Afrique* did: who for his dissolute liuing,

A TREATISE

being in y^e field called *Campus Martius*, with his white gowne, all spotted with vices, to demand the Pretorship of the people: he had neuer obtained it, had it not been thorow the fauour of *Cicereus* in times past, his fathers Chauncellor: Albeit that afterwarde his parents considering, that they might reape dishonour and reproch thereby, they laid a blocke in his way, that hee neuer attained to any such dignitie, and did forcibly take the ring from his finger, wherein his fathers picture was ingrauen, deeming him vnworthy, to be partaker of his fathers glorie, and Nobilitie: so that afterwarde he was accompted amongst men ignoble. What honour was the son of *Q. Fab.* the great, worthie of, from whom *Q. Pompeius* (because he liued a ruffian like life) tooke away the libertie to spend his own goods freely? Surely none at all. It stode him in no steede, that his father had beene the generall of the Romaine armies.

What Nobilitie did the sonne of *Clodius* deserue, who giuing himself ouer to the loue of a common woman, leade his life in that sorte, that hee was worthy of all shame, and dishonour? The auncient Nobilitie of his father, was of no importance vnto him. Now thou mayst see *Possidonio*, how well thou knowest what power consisteth in bloud, touching y^e nobilitie of man, which that y^e mightest exalt vnto the skies, thou wert not ashamed to compare it, with the Nobilitie of horses, dogges, and other thinges. You may now perceiue gentlemen what a wonderfull thing *Possidonio* his Nobilitie is, seeing that it is equall to the Nobilitie of beastes.

Diddest thou thinke *Possidonio*, therewithall to get the victorie of me? Are these the strong weapons, against the which no force coulde preuaile, as thou diddest

diddest make vs belecue ? Truly amongst dogges we doe not seeke out the most noble, but the best and most valorous ; and so likewise of horses and other things, as (agreeable to the matter) thou diddest reckon vp. Then their Nobilitie, doth not consist in seede as thou saiest, but in the goodnesse and worthinesse of them.

Fabricio gathered his strength together, as if he had been carefull howe hee should haue proceeded, when as the Ladie *Laura*, who had with great attention marked his words, addressing her speech vnto him, said after this maner.

I woulde vvillingly vnderstand *Fabricio*, howe thou wilt aunswere that whiche hee affirmed, that the thing ingendred according vnto Nature, doth not onely receiue of the ingenderer, his essence or being, but his qualities in like sorte, and all that which followeth the essence, concluding thereby that a Noble man cannot ingender anie thing else then an Honourable personage, whiche I did denie.

I will not Madame (quoth *Fabricio*) make anie other aunswere thereto, then that which was alleadged by you, to wit, that this qualitie, to become Noble, may eyther be, or not be : and it followeth not of necessitie, if the father be a Noble man, that the sonne be likewise Noble.

Yea but (quoth the Ladie *Laura*) hee replied I knowe not what, by which it seemed vnto mee, that that which I had affirmed, could hardly be concluded.

Yes right well (quoth *Fabricio*) For albeit he argued, that like as white, or blacke is transfused into the children,

A TREATISE

dren, euen so is Nobilitie. I saie that his similitude is not worth a rushe: Inasmuch as blacknesse, or whitenesse, are demonstratiue dispositions of the body; but Nobilitie is a hidden propertie of the minde, in regard y it proceedeth of vertue: So that a painter may by arte easily alter either the whitenesse or blacknesse of man: but he can neuer paint forth with his pensill, the nobilitie of the minde, as being a thing not subiect vnto the sight of bodily eyes. Like as it happeneth with fire, the flames whereof may well be drawne, but the heate can not in any wise be painted. Wherefore I say, it is no good conclusiō, that what so giueth the essence, or being, giueth likewise that which followeth the essence, which holdeth true concerning the disposition of the bodie, but not of the qualities of the minde. Do we not see commonly diuers parentes, who for the most part doe ingender children, of the which some one prooueth apt to learne vertue, and to be instructed in good maners, and another prone to followe all maner of vice? you see then *Madame*, what diuersities doe proceede of these resemblances, which were well vnderstoode by you maister *Iohn Francisco*. Wherefore this tale that you inserted in the midst of *Possidonio* his discourse, ought to breede no woonder: For albeit it happen in some women, as you gaue vs yesterday to vnderstand, you may find the clean contrary in others. And whereas the birth of *Romulus*, and *Remus* cannot be hidden: I say M. *Dominico*, that their value, and vertue did manifest their Nobilitie, and not the temper of their bodies. You may now *Madame* discover his follies, which thou thy selfe *Possidonio* couldest not discern, when as thou wentest about to perswade vs, that man doth receiue from the ingenderer the qualities of the minde. But what great follie is this? wherefore diddest

diddest thou not as well affirme, that a holy personage, or a man well seene in naturall causes, or experienced in Diuinitie, could not ingender any other, then a saint, a good Naturaliste, or a diuine; all which are qualities consisting in the minde? Which if it shoulde come to passe, the worlde should be well replenished with holinesse, with wisdom, with experience, and thou shouldest then be one of that number. But as that cannot happen, so likewise I say, that it cannot follow, that one noble man, doth engender a noble childe, nobilitie being a qualitie of the minde, euen as wisdom, experience, and other vertues of like sorte are. And now how canst thou haue the heart to expect the victorie, concerning the controuerisie in question, seeing I haue shewed by degrees, thy manifest errors?

But let vs yet proceede to thy other reasons, against which I need not take any stronger weapons, they being as weake as the other I haue ouerthrowne. Albeit that this seemeth to carrie some force with it, which we see is commonly vsed in all partes of the world, that such as are borne of noble parents, are so held: if thou haddest spoken otherwise, and said in steede of this, they are Noble men, they are in deede called so, it had not been amisse. For it is true, and it cannot any waies bee denied, that whosoever is descended of Noble bloud, wee call him a Noble man; but generallie I denie this to containe a trueth.

Tell me I pray thee, if he that is borne of a christian, be straightwaies a christian? Surely no. But euen as it is not onely necessary for him that intendeth to be a right and true Christian, that by birth hee doe descend of christian parentes, but likewise that hee receiue baptisme, and keep the Commandements of Christ:

A T R E A T I S E

So it is not sufficient for a noble man, to come of Noble blood, as a thing that maketh little or nothing in matter of Nobilitie: but that he obserue that which is requisite for the attaining of perfit Nobilitie, to wit, that hee become Noble thorough the vertues of the minde. Besides that, I might adde hereunto, that this thy consideration is farre from the purpose, in asmuch as the prize was not giuen to him that shoulde onelie beare the name, but to him that should in effect be the most noble of vs two.

Albeit that thou mightest reply hereunto *Possidonio*, as thou hast already affirmed, that if they that descend of Noble men were not noble, then they should not enioy the same priuiledges that Noble men doe. Wherevnto I woulde aunswere, that the bad custome of men, therein is much to be blamed: Forasmuch as they doe not imploy their discourse to that, whereby the trueth may be made manifest, but onelie giuing credite to the bare name, they doe argue in such maner: So that if we turne our back to the trueth, and giue our minds to follow the lying opinion of the rude vulgar sorte, which for the most part, doe fall into great errors, thy saying then shall be true. Thou seest now *Possidonio*, of what force thy argumentes are.

But I will passe ouer to the rest, and come vnto that, by which thou diddest seeke to prooue, that if the infamie of a man, be sufficient to blemish his whole stocke, that the glorie and worthinesse therof ought by great reason, extend it selfe to all his posteritie: whereupon thou diddest consequently inferre that thy auncestors being noble, thou must needs be so. Although that this reason seeme apparent; yet in answering therunto, I might say (and therewithall if I list not perticularly to passe thorow the rest of the reasons, resist whatsoever thou

thou hast alleadged) that we do not now debate of the Nobilitie of our ancestors, but we are to prooue which of vs two is the most noble, and so by consequent shew what our nobilitie is, & not set forth the honor of other men. And herein I will yeeld vnto thee, that if we were both equall in Nobilitie of the minde, that perhaps in regard of the antiquitie of thy predecessors, y^e mightest be more noble then my selfe.

But iudge nowe what these high praises, and commendations of thy predecessors doe auaille thee, and to what great purpose they were yesterday alleaged by thee? For thou diddest with no lesse readinesse, dexterity, and good grace recount them, then they who from the top of some high towre doe with a loud voice tell the wonderful miracles of auncient holy fathers, or from some scaffold in the market place recite out of the old *Romanes*, the cruell warres of the *Giantes*, or the furious loue of some *Orlando*. But to let that passe, how well this thy glorious speech did become thee, I will proceed to this argument, where thou diddest say, that like as the honour of the sonne, did extend to the father, much more did the fathers glorie stretch vnto his children. It is true *Possidonio*, yet it followeth not, that if the sonne by his owne vertues be made noble, that the father is anie way partaker thereof, or made noble thereby: For if the sonne were verie expert in feates of armes, or skilfull in matter of learning, surely hee should want his senses that woulde affirme, that the father did participate eyther in the experience of the arte Militarie, or in Science with his Sonne, they both beeing giftes of the minde, wherein as I haue oftentimes sayde, true and perfit Nobilitie consisteth: from the whiche, it can verie hardlie bee transferred from one bodie to another, euen as

A T R E A T I S E

thou diddest vainly perswade thy selfe. These are thy sophistate reasons *Possidonio*, which being resisted by the trueth, thou maiest perceiue what force they are of.

Fabricio hauing hitherunto continued his speech, he pawfed a while, and afterwarde proceeded in this maner.

Worthy Gent. M. Peter *Anthonie* knowing as well as my selfe the slenderesse of *Possidonio* his argumentes, which he heaped the one on the others head, he could not withhold from taking part with him, and amongst other things to alleadge this reason in his behalfe: that forasmuch as amongst the lawes of the *Romains*, there was one, which commanded y^e the image of euery worthy knight, shoulde be made and set in some publicke place, which in festing maner, they did with great iolitic visite. We may argue, and say, that if the *Romaines* did owe such honour vnto images, much more was due vnto the liuing children, because they were but an imitation of nature, whereas nature her selfe was apparent in the children. Now if this your reason (M. Peter *Anthonie*) had as much force in it, as it sheweth; I doubt not but it would appale me, and giue so great courage vnto *Possidonio*, that you might easilie perswade him, he were wel worthy to haue one of these images erected for him. And although that I shoulde frame no other answer therunto, then I did to the last, yet shuld I be still vpon a sure ground. Neuerthelesse, I wil vse such reasons in disprooffe therof, as I did to y^e former. For if thou saiest that their children whose images are erected to y^e common view of al men, do participat with their fathers vertues; then I do affirm that thy allegation is true: but if therein they differ, then this their nobilitie, and reputation is not transferred to them.

So

So likewise if the children of those who were represented by those images, had beene worthy of such honour, surely the Romanes, who wanted no good counsell, would willinglie haue granted it: it followeth then that the honour was not done to the image, whether it were of Marble, or mettall, but to the vvorthy memorie of his vertues, whose lineaments the image did liuely set forth, which could not be we executed in y person of their child, being made in regard of their ovne proper vertue, and not in respect of any thing belōging to another.

Besides that, there are and haue beene diuers persons, who being descended of valorous and vvorthie parentes, haue vvith shame darkened their brightnesse, as we haue already affirmed. And had it bin reasonable that the wise Romans, should haue honoured those in such a manner, in regard of their auncestors? Surely no. And what wouldest thou say *Possidonio*, if these men should lauishlie reckon vp the worthy deeds of their predecessors, or if they should publikely shew their images? wouldest thou indeed iudge them to be noblemen? God forbid, nay so much more base ought they to be deemed, that they hauing before their eyes the troden pathes, which doe manifestly shewe them the waie to become noble, they take a cleane contrarie course.

What doth then the worthinesse of bloud preuaile, when as it is obscured by dishonest conditions? And vvhat annoyance dooth the basenesse of bloud bring, when it is honoured by noble vertues? Surely, none at all. For in perfect nobilitie, the obscurenesse, or worthinesse of bloud is not to be considered. But let vs proceed further: thou diddest enter into the gouernment of cities, and the administration of diuine offices, saying

A TREATISE

that they were noble: if I knew that this thy argument made any thing to the purpose, I would willingly answer it, as I haue doone the rest; but I will say nothing herein, but that thou thy selfe vnderstandest not, what thou diddest say: for let vs yeeld it to be true; what doth followe thereof? Art thou I pray thee any of those gouernours? Thou seest *Possidonio*, how easilie thy strong reasons are resisted.

And art thou ignorant, that many men oftentimes doe come to the degree of a Cardinall, or of a bishop, who haue no great store of gold in their cofers? In former age there vvas no regard had, neither of bloud, as thou wouldest haue it, nor of gold or siluer, but vnto a man adorned with vertue, whose life deserued praise. As it fell out on a time in the Consistorie of Cardinals, whoe beeing assembled in the Conclaue, to chuse a newe Pope in his roome that was dead, tyvo were in election to be preferred to that dignitie, the one of them being descended of royall bloud, the other of a meane familie. Many of the Cardinals, in regarde of the noble descent of the one, would aduance him vnto the popedome: and many in respect of the deserts and holie life of the other, desired to place him in that high estate, the one company of Cardinals opposing themselves against the other.

The latter alleadging, that they sought to establish and create the successeur of Peter, a Preacher, the son of a Smith, not the sonne of *Cesar Augustus*. In the end, they hauing no respect to the worthines of bloud, but to the perfection of both their liues, the last for his Soueraigne vertues (they contemning the great nobilitie of the other) attained to the popedome.

Moyse did the like, who might haue left his children the principalitie and dignitie, but he made choice
of

of *Iosua*, vvho was not of his blood, to denote and signifie thereby, that it is not blood, but the life of man that is to be considered therein. Of which opinion amongst others, was the Emperour *Elius*, who would not permit, that his sonne should bee chosen Emperour after him: saying that the Empire did demaunde a manne worthe thereof, and not blood. Vertue then, and not nobilitie of blood, maketh a man of desert. How manie Popes haue there beene, who haue not beene of any noble stocke, but issued of verie poore parentes: as *Felix* the thirde, whose father was a priest of a base lineage: *Gelasius*, *Agapites*, *Theodorus*, *Siluerius*, and many others attained vnto the Popedome, albeit they were descended of a base stocke. Yet was not their blood so obscure, but their vertue of as great woorth, which made them merite so high a dignitie. And there hath not beene onelie Popes, borne of verie meane parentes, but likewise kings and Emperors, and other valiant captaines.

Tullius Hostilius was borne of lowe degree, who in his young yeares was a shepheard, and was afterwards aduanced to the gouernement of the Romaine Empire, and vvas the third king of the Romaines. *Tarquinius Priscus* was the sonne of *Demaratus*, a marchant banished out of Corinth his natieue Countrie, & notwithstanding he became the fift king of the Romans.

Seruius Tullius, who was borne in most base estate of seruitude, was the sixt king of the Romaines. *Dioclesian Dalmat.* borne in *Salone*, of a poore stocke, became Emperour of Rome. Likewise *Maximinus* the emperour, borne in *Thracia*, did descend of very meane parents. *Martius Rutilius* was by blood a Plebeian (that is one of the common people) and yet created Consull fve times, he triumphed ouer the *Falisci*.

Cornelius

A TREATISE

Cornelius Cossus was also by birth a Plebeian, hee manfullie killed *Laertes Tolomeus* duke of the *Fidenati*, whose riches and spoiles he consecrated to *Iupiter Feretrian* at Rome, obtaining therein the second place, he triūphed also ouer many nations. *Gneius Flavius*, his father was a bondman, and yet he was created Pretor at Rome. *Terentius Varro*, and *M. Perpennus* Consuls, *Lucius Volumnus*, and *Mamercus Dictators*. *Q. Publius Philon*, Pretor, all these did spring of meane parentes: But their apparant vertue, and singular value vvas so great, that thereby they gaue great ayde vnto the Romaine common wealth.

The Soueraigne Orator *Demosthenes* amongst the Grecians, was borne of one by occupation a Cutler, scarce knowne amongst men: And *Euripides* that most famous Poet, his mother was an hearbe wife. *Socrates* who was by the iudgement of *Apollo*, the wisest man in the vworld, drevv his beginning from a Mason. *Xenophon* was borne in *Archeas*, a village by *Athens*, of one *Grillus* of base estate. But the obscurenesse of their bloud, and of infinite others which I might rehearse vnto you, haue lightened the world, and exalted their name euen to the skies. Of the vvhich some of them by force of Armes, others by vertue of the mind, are become famous and honourable. You may by this well discerne, if a Plebeian, or one borne of base estate, may arise to great nobilitie and renovvne, and iudge, whether the nobilitie of bloud, or the vertue of the mind be required in those that beare publike offices.

Here maister *John Francisco*, not permitting *Fabricio* to passe any further, said vnto him after this maner. I doe not thinke *Fabricio*, that that which thou hast answered vnto *Possidonio* his two former arguments, doth wholie confute them; seeing that hee did not ground
himselfe

himselfe in such extremitie, as it seemeth thou takest it: for if the vertues of children didde equall their fathers perfections, they should likewise deserue to haue images erected for them, not if they were altogether vnequall and contrarie vnto them, which neither he, nor I, did make any doubt of, as thou didst affirme of the sons of *Q. Fabius*, and of *Claudius*, which was no part of our meaning. Neither shouldest thou consider these two so great extremities, but take the meane betweene them, and then perhaps we may vnderstand the troth of that which he said, to wit, that they y do descend of noble men, ought to be had in great estimation, & consequently be partakers of the nobilitie of their parents: whereby he meant (and that not indirectly) to inferre, that for the remembrance of their auncestors, the gouernment of Cities and diuine offices, were deseruedlie bestowed vpon them. And although that a bishop or any other, be well stored with gold, doe not wee see them oftentimes likewise descended of a noble house? Maister *Iohn Francisco* paused here, when as *Fabricio* answered immediatly.

I denie not, but that in such manner of men of the middle sort, there is some part of nobilitie or reputation, which proceedeth from their auncestors, but I intending to proue, what true and perfect nobilitie vvas, that vvhich I affirmed vnto you may bee well concluded: for these of the middle sort thou talkest of, are not true and perfect noble men, but such as doe represent the nobilitie of others: and what difference there is betweene that which is troth, and that which doth onlie represent it, there is none of you but may easilie vnderstand.

As touching the other point wherein thou saist, that y most part of bishops & cardinals, are of noble descent:

L

You

A TREATISE

You know right welmaister *John Francisco*, that the sonne of God made no scruple, to chuse *S. Peter* who was come but of meane parentage, and himselfe a simple fisher: Neither did he of his infinite goodnesse disdain to receiue into the apostleship men of base estate, as most part of the apostles were, who were worthy of heauenly grace, as a reward of their holie life, and constant faith. To how many miserable men, to how many poore soules, to how many beggers, hath the sonne of God vouchsafed to giue the kingdom of heauen? Trulie honour of bloud, is not considered therein, but Nobilitie of maners, and purenesse of faith: for vvith God we are all equal, and there is no difference of persons before him, but in asmuch as one excelleth another in goodnesse, and aswell the noble man as the begger shal be iudged, whether he be righteous or a sinner.

It is then the life of man, adorned with good conditions, and with loyall faith, which doth conioin vs with God; and a depraued life which doth separate vs from him, and not the nobilitie of bloud, or the worthines of our progenitors. Wherefore if you rest satisfied herewith, I will with your good leaue returne to my former enterprise.

You haue thorowly satisfied me (quoth maister *John Francisco*) and therefore you may hold on your course, and take what leisure you list.

Fabricio, gaue this further entrance into his discourse. If my memorie serue me well *Possidonio*, vnto thy former reasons thou diddest adde, that with popes, emperors and kinges, he which is of noble bloud taketh the chiefe place, and is honoured more then others. Suppose the case that this were true, as it is not, yet art not thou any of them. But where dost thou finde, that he which is borne of noble bloud, hath such preheminece?

Trulie

Truely there is no such matter. Surely the Church of Christ, should shine maruellously, if it were onelie lightened with the beams of noble men & empires, shuld be well maintained, and kingdomes become better, if they were gouerned by their counsell. Thou art deceiued *Possidonio*, for I say not, if men of noble bloud, but such as are excellent in vertue, & experienced in knowledge, did depart and leaue the seruice of princes, there would be no gouernment at all. Who do rule, who do manage, who doe maintain the world, but wise men, and such as are indued with wisdom, whether they be noble by bloud, or of meane birth? These haue y^e chieftest places, these men are honoured, and not men nobly borne, void of vertue, and deprived of knowledge.

Now doe I returne to you maister *Dominico*, who to strengthen *Possidonio* his weake side with a subtil maner of argumēt, you reasoned, that if this nobility of bloud, was so highly esteemed of the son of God, man incarnate here on earth, in asmuch as he was borne of the virgin Mary, who descended of the royall stocke of K. Dauid, how much more ought it to be affected, & reuerenced of vs: I am certain that you haue no such beleefe, as hee which knowveth the troth, as well as the best of vs; but did you not alledge that which came into your minde in fauour of *Possidonio*, rather to anger the lady *Camilla*, who did still threaten you, that you might be put to silence, then in any intention you had to gaine say me? I verilie belecue it.

And in troth likewise, if I were onely to satisfie you, I vvould passe it over with silence, as a matter superfluous: but because I intend to confirme *Possidonio* his beleefe, and these Ladies, I say that the Lord of heauen, did not choose the virgine Mary to be his mother, only bicause shee was borne of the royall stocke of King

A TREATISE

Dauid, but in regard of the Soueraigne excellencie of hir vertues, of her humilitie, and patience.

For what Lady was there euer so graced of God, as to be saluted by the spirit of an Angell, and called full of grace, blessed, and exalted aboue all other women, except the most glorious virgine Mary? which she may thanke her humilitie and purenesse of heart for, and not her nobilitie onely. You may see then, that the nobility of Mary was not considered of God, but her humilitie and sinceritie of spirit. You did afterwards Maister *Dominico* following on your matter, tel vs the manifest folly of *Herode Ascalonita*, wherunto I neede not answer any thing else, but that some madnes entred into his minde, in such sorte to execute his foolish fantasie. What shal I say vnto you concerning the temeritie of *Equiti*, and the presumption of others, alledaged by you, who being descended of base blood, did seeke to ennoble themselves in the worthy families of other men? Surely if you consider their end, you shall finde, that they receiued condigne punishment for their foolish conceit, some of them being banished, others dying in prison, others hanged, as a recompence of their vnadvised enterprise. Wherefore we ought not to sette their follies before vs as examples to followe. Besides, they sought not how to ennoble themselves, as you affirme, but to succeed in the kingdome & patrimonie of those, whose successours coulourably they pretended themselves to be. But why did you not bring him for an example, who was more familiar with god then any other mortal man, who did not vaunt himselfe, that he was descended of the blood royal, but did deny that he was born of Pharaos daughter; desiring rather to be persecuted, as one of the people of God, then to take vpon him the glory of the royall blood, and to possesse the riches of Egypt?

And

And *Gordius* the father of *Midas*, who is reported to be the richest king that euer was, who from the estate of a husbandman, became king of *Phrigia*, & between the limites of the lesser, and the greater *Asia*, built a Citie called *Gordium*, where he consecrated a temple to *Iupiter*, in the which not being ashamed of his obscure birth, neither forgetting his base calling, he offered the plough sharde, which manie times hee had tilled the ground withall, and the harneis hee was woont to couple his oxen together to the yoke, to the end that in all ages it might be manifest to all men, what vocation he had been of: Such examples ought in deed to be recommended vnto vs, & not those recited by you.

How weake then (worthy Gent.) the reasons are, that *Possidonio* yesterday with many wordes set forth, you may already partly iudge: as I will better approoue vnto you by the sequele of my discourse. Forasmuch as speaking of Nobilitie, he was forced to descend vnto vertue, whence true and perfit Nobilitie is deriued, whereof he discoursed I know not what, but hee made such large flightes a farre off, as the first Faulcon did yesternight about the pheasant: the reason was, because he perceiued that the cleere light therof did ouermuch bleare his eies. Wherefore, like as the warrier, who finding himselfe ouermatched with weapons, which he cannot weild, leaueth them to take others, which he may manage with greater facilitie: Euen so fell it out yesterday with *Possidonio*: For hauing armed himselfe with vertue, and knowing not how to vse it, he had his sodaine recourse vnto riches, hee skirmished so liuely with them, that he hath not onely thereby made himselfe more noble then I am, but then any other man likewise. But now I being come to prooue what force those weapons haue, I doubt not but I shall make it

A TREATISE

manifest, that they are farre more weake, and of lesse defence then the other.

He grounded himselfe vpon two propositions, the one was, that a learned and vertuous man, hath no nobilitie in him (as if that learning serued to no purpose, to make a man noble) if he want such riches as are required to be in a gent. because they are no lesse necessarie in nobilitie then bloud is. The other was, that declaring what goodes were, hee forced himselfe to prooue that they were riches.

Nowe before I enter into the first proposition, I will make manifest vnto you, what trueness is in the last, to the end you afterwarde may with more ease know the veritie of the other. Thou wouldest then *Possidonio*, haue riches to be goods, thou deceiuest thy selfe greatly: for if they were goodes, they would cause the man that possesseth them to become better, and more perfect then he is; for such is the propertie of that which is good: but riches doe not effect this: For if these certaine goodes, did make a man more perfect, wee must of necessitie conclude, that man should be lesse perfect, then the thing by which he is made more perfect, which if thou grauntest for true, it shoulde followe, that gold, siluer, pretious stones, trees, and other liuing creatures deprived of reason (for these thinges, and such like are riches) should be more perfect, and more Noble then man, which should be too great a follie to think, much more to vtter. Wee will then conclude, that riches are no goodes.

Moreouer, it is a matter verie euident, that of a good thing can nothing followe but that which is good: but of these thy riches, what good may euer insue? Nay rather all venemous branches doe spring from that root: They are not then good, but the cause of all euill.

Which

Which may euidently be seene by the vnbrideled desire *Marcus Crassus* did beare vnto riches, which was the cause that he robbed the temple of Ierusalem, and not only of his owne death, but of *Marcus* his son, and y^e ruine of the *Romaine* armi. For hee being chosen Consul by the *Romaines* against the *Parthians*, and conducting the army, he came into the Prouince of *Iudea*, and being at Ierusalem, hee tooke from the holie temple of *Salomon* 8000. talentes of gold, and tooke away a golden beame, which amounted to the waight of 300. pound, to the which the pretious vailles of the temple shining with a wonderfull beautie, and incredible arte, were hanged: and to be short, he tooke al the ornamentes which were of any value. Hee passing with this pray into *Parthia*, beeing more bent to pillage, & to heape vp gold, then to ouercome the enemies, in the end was driuen to that necessitie, that with small adoe, he was the cause of his sons death, and the discomfiture of the armie: the *Romaines* being then fore beaten, and villanously murthered by that people, his owne head, & his right hand, was cut off, & presented to *Herod* king of the *Parthians*, who in asmuch as in his life time he had so much bin affected to the loue of gold, to the end that after his death hee might glut himselfe therewith, *Herod* caused gold to be melted, & poured into his mouth. Likewise the riches of *Ptolomy* king of *Cypres*, were cause of his death: For hee vnderstanding that the *Romaines* were determined to bring his kingdom into the forme of a Prouince, & take possession of his great treasor, he thought to drown the in the sea, rather then they shuld come into the hands of his enemies: but his mind being buried in his treasor, y^e miserable wretch could not indure to see them lost in y^e fort, but rather made choise (after that *Cato Portius* was

A TREATISE

was to that end sent into *Cypres* by the Senate) to take away his own life by poyson, then to drown his wealth in the sea : So that it cannot be denied but that riches are the cause of all euill : For besides the mischiefe I haue alreadie recited that commeth by the greedie desire of them : we see (which my tongue hath horror to tell) that the father is the murtherer of his sonne, the brother of the brother, and one friend of another. I will not to this purpose alleadge thee any examples, either out of auncient, or moderne histories, being a thing that thou mayst now a dayes heare out of the mouth of euery man, and a matter so manifest, that euery where we haue tidinges thereof. Men doe on all sides set vpon eche other, and are in warre continually for this pelfe.

We see in euerie place, abhominable treasons, and conspiracies, to attaine vnto riches. This is not all that may be said thereof, but much more: for the rich man is alwaies in feare, that being pursued by some enuious person, he be not at sometime, or other murthered. If he eate, he feareth poison: if he walke abroad, terror attendeth on him: he quaketh at the name of warre: he standeth in dread of water, of aire, of fire: and to conclude, he is neuer without feare. And this happeneth, because he knoweth, that riches vanish away as lightly as the smoke before the winde, what shall I say more?

The rich man is alwaies a thirst, with an vnquenchable drought, as hee that is tormented with a quotidian ague. For if he be wealthy, he coueteth still to possesse more: so y^e the whole world cannot suffice to glut his greedie desire. Who is then so vnaduised to terme such a one rich, who (miserable man) is no otherwise tormented then *Tantalus*, who sitting in the midst of fresh and cleere running streames, seeth most pleasant
and

and delightfull fruite rounde about him, and his heart burning to eate and drinke of them, and yet hee cannot.

God forbid that such a one should be called rich, but rather poore and needie aboue all other men. Surely if riches were so necessarie, the wise *Athenians* would neuer haue decreed, and ordained for a law, that who-soeuer became rich within their Citie, shoulde for ten yeares space be banished *Athens*, esteeming it to be farre more profitable to voide the Citie of such persons, then to let them remaine there. The *Athenians* knew well what infections, riches doe bring with them: which was the cause that as some plague, they banished them out of *Athens*. Now thou seest *Possidonio*, what good these thy goodes doe bring.

Fabricio, proceeded in like maner to the handling of his other argumentes; when as *M. Peter Anthony*, as it were taking the word out of his mouth, saide thus vnto him.

Truely *Fabricio*, that which thou hast spoken of riches, hath brought me into a great doubt: For hearing what thou hast discoursed therof, on the one side it seemeth vnto me to be true: and yet on the other side, I am perswaded it is not wholly so. Forasmuch as euerie day, and in all places, the most part of mortall men do, some after one maner, some after another, giue themselves to the getting of gold and siluer: yea not onelie the base and vulgar sort, but likewise men of great credite, and reputation, old and yong men, and those that are most wise in worldly matters. Others carelesse of their owne life, doe indeiour to enrich themselves, vpon the sencelesse waters of the sea, and doe daily scoure the coasts of the East countries, the shores of the west parts, and from North to South, and South to North,

A TREATISE

and leaue no place vntouched, where they may enrich themselves: Others to that purpose doe follow bloudy battels; and some men doe manfully labour both night and day to get wealth. These men in woodes, & mountaines, those in vallies and plaines: Others seek to come by riches by dangerous robberies: Others by diuelish vsurie. Wherefore if as thou sayst, riches were cause of so great euill, surely no man that loueth his welfare, would against his will purchase his owne bane, with so many cares, and intollerable disquiet. So that I seeing so strong reasons on both sides, it is hard for mee, nay a thing impossible to bolte out the truth.

It is an easie matter to resolue this thy doubt, (answered *Fabricio*,) For auncient authours haue left vs in writing, that riches (whosoever first had the sight thereof) is a thing most deformed, wearing on the naturall visage thereof, a masque of most fine gold, denoting thereby, that it is faire in apparence, but foule within: wherefore they who trauell so many Countries, and take such paines to seeke it, are enamoured with the outward shewe, which blindeth the eyes of the vnderstanding: so that they can hardly discern how hurtfull the inward deformitie thereof is. Which maketh man who is forgetfull of himselfe, to addict his minde thereto. Which *Paulus Emilius* perceiuing, when he ouercame *Perseus* king of *Macedonia*, and gloriously triumphed over him; hee did not onely forbear to touche the infinite treasure of the king, but likewise to see it, although he might haue been possessor of a wonderfull bootie.

Pompey the great hauing taken by force the temple of *Ierusalem*, whereof I lately made mention, found there an inestimable treasure, and did not onely abstaine from taking the spoile thereof, as *Marcus Cras-*

sus

hus did afterwarde, but also from touching it, as hee which knew well what hurt riches did bring. And hee who before-hand knoweth the secrets of man, as hee who made them, that by the apparent beauty of riches, man would easily contemne true and eternall treasure, hath often put vs in minde, in his infallible doctrine, that here on earth man shoulde not heape vp riches, as a corruptible thing, and subiect to a thousand hazards.

M. *Peter Anthonie* knew not well what to reply to his answer, which pleased him aboue measure, shewing that he was thoroughly satisfied therewith. Wherefore *Fabricio*, following on his discourse proceeded in this maner.

Gentlemen; besides that riches are goodes, *Possidonio* would haue them conioyned to Nobilitie by such necessitie, that if anie noble man whatsoeuer were de- priued thereof, hee should no more be accompted noble amongst men. His meaning is then, that so long as a noble man enioyeth wealth, he shall be honourable, and afterwards be of base accompt: O foolish opinion and deceitful believe! Dost not thou consider *Possidonio*, that this thy Nobilitie is light as the winde, and dependeth of Fortune, euen as hee who being on the maine sea, hath lost both sterne, and saile together at a clappe?

Forasmuch as if those small nūber of souldiers which are now left to guard the towne, did spoile thy treasure: surely thou shouldest in one instant, leese both thy wealth, and thy nobility. And as often as this were true, that riches did make a man noble: it should necessarily follow, that an vsurer or a theefe beeing borne a gentleman, shoulde become more Noble then he was before, by meanes of his substance, which he should gaine

ATREATISE

vnlawfully, which howe farre it disagreeeth from the trueth, I need not further to manifest vnto you. This is the great glorie which riches bringeth to Nobilitie; of the which *Possidonio*, thou wouldest that liberalitie should proceede, wherein thou art as much deceiued, as in that which hath already been spoken of, because true liberalitie springeth not from riches, but from the loue of the minde. Which *Philip* of *Macedonia* (that I may not further enlarge my discourse, to perswade you therein) did manifestly prooue, when hee seeing *Alexander* his sonne ouerlause to certaine Princes of his kingdome, whose loue hee sought to winne vnto him by liberall giftes, in aduising him like a father, he wrote vnto him, that hee ought not to hope for anie faithfulness in those friendes, who are purchased by presentes, which when we want to send, then doe they faile vs likewise: but that hee ought to gratifie them with loue, and sinceritie of heart, wherein true liberalitie consisteth. This king was well acquainted, of what efficacie liberalitie which proceedeth from riches, was. Thou seest then *Possidonio*, that the Nobilitie which yesterday thou diddest affirme to bee true and perfit, is nowe fraile, vaine, and none at all. I say then, that it is neither the stately pallaces, nor pleasant gardens, nor fertill fields, nor well fashioned apparell, nor aboundance of golde or siluer, as thinges which haue no stabilitie in them, which doe make a man Noble, but vertue whiche shineth in the minde.

There doth the perfection of nobility remaine: there the bright glorie of man doth giue light. Nay let warres spring amongst mightie Potentates, let floudes of waters fall from heauen; let the riuers and the Sea both together swell; let the fire bee kindled in these riches

riches which thou callest goods: for all this, this kind of Nobilitie will neuer shrink, nor become lesse, because it is incorruptible; which the philosopher, no lesse replenished with nobilitie, then wisdom, may easily perswade thee; I meane *Bias*, who seeing *Priene* his country vtterly brought to ruine, and many bearing away their substance from thence, and hee being asked why he did not carrie part of his goods with him, answered; I alwaies carie all my riches with me: and truely he did charge his mind, not his shoulders with them as others doe, and his wealth was not discerned with the eies of the body, but with the eies of his mind.

But nowe that I haue sufficiently answered the reasons which thou diddest alleadge in the behalfe of riches: for by this which I haue said, thou mayst imagine how they make for thee; now I say it shall not be from the purpose, if I return to the other proposition, which I left vnspoken of; to wit, that in a learned and vertuous man, there can bee no nobilitie, if hee want riches which are required in a gentleman; because that learning is of it selfe vaine to ennoble any man.

What *Possidonio*, dost thou affirme that learning is a vaine thing in nobilitie, and that science and knowledge are vaine? Dooest thou holde that that is vaine which doth infuse the true light into nobilitie? O wonderfull vndiscreetnesse, ful of meere follie! O most erroneous opinion worthy of all blame! But why doe I so much maruell, if a blind man cannot discern the right waie? Well, thou shalt before we depart from hence wel perceiue, what force learning and knowledge are of, in nobilitie. And truely if they had not beene worthy great estimation, Philip the Macedonian king, whose force and power was knowne to all Greece, would not so soone as he had a sonne borne, haue written to *Aristo-*

A TREATISE

He the onely learned and wise philosopher, in that sort he did. Knowe thou *Aristotle*, that I haue a sonne borne vnto me, for the which I render immortal thanks vnto the Gods, not so much for that he is borne, as because his birth hath happened in the daies of thy life, for asmuch as I hope that being instructed, and trained vppe by thee, hee will proue a worthy successour of vs and our kingdome. Weigh with thy selfe how the mind of a good prince vvas full of ioy, because his sonne was borne in his time, whose knowvledge and learning, did not onely with the sound thereof fill all the worlde, but euen pierce the cloudes. He being a good father did desire to adorn his son with learning and science, as treasures of far more inestimable value, then his nobilitie; his kingdome and riches were, the greatnesse and the Nobilitie of his Sonne, when as *Alexander* the Great was scarcely borne vnto him.

And *Alexander* himselfe hauing vnderstood, that *Aristotle* his maister had published his vvorks abroad, especiallie those which did intreat of naturall causes, he was much offended therewith, and saide; Wherin shall we excel other men, if those Sciences wherof we make profission, are common to euery man? Surely I had rather passe other men in learning, & knowledge, then in riches, and in Lordly dominion. O vvordes most worthy of so great a Prince, who preferred knowledge before all things in the world.

This was hee, vvho going from *Corinth* to visit the Philosopher *Diogenes* in his tubbe, enuyed his glorie, saying vnto him, that if he had not beene *Alexander*, he vvould haue desired to haue beene *Diogenes*: and that not bicause of the worthinesse of his Nobilitie, but in regard of his great learning and wisedome; vvich would neuer haue happened that *Alexander* shoulde haue

haue desired, being not that which he was, but to haue beene *Diogenes*.

You may now see what power learning is of *Possidonio*; what force the Sciences haue: for if *Alexander* the great, the ruler of all the East part of the world, did so much loue and affect them, as I haue giuen you to vnderstand, it is not to be beleued that they are vaine in the ennobling of man. And *Paulus Emilius* hauing ouercome *Perseus*, king of *Macedonia*, as I lately tolde you, took only out of all his treasure, two bookes, to instruct his children withal: thereby likewise you may perceiue, how farre greater the estimation of learning then of riches is, and whether they bring not greater glory to a noble man then it dooth. Whereby thou mayest vnderstand, that in arguing vainely yesterdaie thou diddest alleadge such things as were not worthie the recitall.

But I will not (gentlemen) particularly call to minde euery seueral argument, which hee heaped together. For he might alledge many more, which notwithstanding by the answeres I haue already made, woulde bee soone ouerthrown, as reasons nothing at al fauoring of troth. Tel me *Possidonio*, doost thou indeed iudge thy weapons to be of as great force as thou didst beleue? Alas, how foolish is this thy opinion, and thy self more sottish if thou yet remaine therein.

VVel, I hope by this resistance that I haue made, y I haue hitherunto satisfied you in euery point.

Yea but (qd the lady *Laura*) with a feminine readines: where haue you forgot that which he saide, when as he granted (if my memory serue me wel) that thou wert likewise a man of honor, but in regard that his nobilitie is more ancient than thine, he is to be iudged to be y most noble. I thou must not leaue that behind thee.

You

A TREATISE

thee; for methought hee spake very aptly to the purpose, concerning that matter.

You doe wel Madame, to put mee in minde of that (quoth *Fabricio*) which had cleane slipt out of my remembrance. And I maruell not though his speech did please you, bicause women cannot so vvel discover the falshood of arguments. For albeit that his proposition were true, that of tvvo equall thinges concurring together in one subiect, the most ancient ought to bee preferred: yet notwithstanding it shall haue no preheminence, if the nobility of both issue out of one fountain. But what shall we say, if the one spring of a more perfect and worthy obiect then the other? Shal we deeme it more noble, onely bicause it is more ancient? Trulie no, Madam.

The like ought to be considered in vs twd, for albeit that he be descended of a more ancient and noble familie, we ought to haue regard vnto that which is most proper to perfect nobilitie. As we may plainlie see in those two images, which are there before you, and are wonderfull pleasing to the sight of those that beholde them; yet dooth the one drawe a kinde of desire more then the other, because it is made more approaching vnto life, wherein the excellencie and perfection of them doth consist, although the other be of greater antiquitie. Novv the nobility of the mind descending of a far more excellent and noble obiect (as before we depart from hence I will shew you) then the nobilitie of bloud: we ought not then to haue recourse vnto the antiquity, but to the perfection and excellencie therof. Doe you now thinke Madam, that *Possidonio* did speak so well as you beleued? But dooth not that which I haue answered thorowlie content you? Surely I am in good hope it doth. But this your gentle remembrāce,
put-

putteth me in mind of that which *Possidonio* did handle afterwards; when as he said, that in asmuch as nature is more perfect than art, his nobilitie being naturall, and mine artificiall, he concluded his nobilitie to be more worthy and more perfect, and consequently, that hee was the more noble.

But *Possidonio*, like as thy other arguments were all disagreeing from the troth, euen so is this. For suppose the case that nature bee more perfect then art, it followeth not that thy conclusion is true: forsomuch as nature hauing equally framed vs all, shee fashioned the minde of man pure and cleane equally in all men: but like as a white paper is apt at the first, to receiue the impression of whatsoeuer thou wilt write therein, if thou fillest the same with vertuous and good works, then it is good and precious; if with bad and vicious, then is it hurtfull and nothing worth: Euen so the mind of man, is apt by nature to receiue either vertue, or vice: if thou traine it vp in vertue, it will become vertuous and Noble; but if thou dispose it to vice, dooest thou thinke it will euer become noble, albeit it descend of a Noble stocke? No surely. Thus then we doe giue the price of nobilitie, not vnto nature but vnto art; and so thy nature shal not be more perfect then my industry, as thou diddest conclude.

Thou diddest perswade thy selfe *Possidonio*, that I should want breath: but dost not thou perceiue, how thy brags yesterday, are to day ouerthrowne, so that thou hast no more to say.

Now it is apparant vnto you all how great *Possidonio* his follies are, and of all other that doe follow his erroneous opinion, vwho deeming themselves noble by bloud, and hauing no notable vertue to commende

N

them-

A TREATISE

themselves, do fill their bodies with winde, feed their mind with smoke, and fly higher in the ayre then euer *Icarus* did, for surely in their countenances is seen nothing else, but winde, smoke, and light matters, by the which they are in no wise to be accounted true & perfect noble men.

By this I well perceiue, that thou hast no other arguments to maintaine thy nobility, seeing that to finish and end thy discourse, thou diddest so lauishly brag of the great wealth and riches: which indeed seem no lesse then thy name *Possidonio* doth import; for in my iudgement it signifieth nothing else, then to be possessor of all. Thou didst run out at randon, in extolling thy braue and stately pallaces, thy faire and pleasant gardens, thy fieldes, thy flocks of beasts, thy sumptuous bankets, thy pompe, thy chiuallrie, and a thousand other vaunts, which did not onely make thee worthy of so smal a ring, as that we are at variance for, but of a roiall crowne. O extreame sottishnes of men, which liue at this day! The best is, that thou art not the only man, that art thus perswaded of thy selfe; for it may be thou art the least of that opinion of such as are souldiors of that band. Euery where there are such fooles, who inioy no other contentment in this world, then to reckon vp their noble descent, who builde castles in the ayre, and seeke to bee commended for that which they neither haue, nor deserue: they exalt themselves with their own mouth, euen to the skies, feeding themselves with a vaine name, taking little thought of the substance and effect.

But in asmuch as this great wealth, which thou diddest so stand vppon, maketh no more to thy purpose, then if thou haddest reckoned vp the riches of *Midas*,

or

or of *Marcus Crassus*, leauing them now behind mee, and sayling ouer this thy windy and swelling sea, it is now high time, that I frame my course in a calmer vwater. Vpon the which setting forward with more leisure, I will passe on my nauigation so farre, as I shall thinke expedient.

Worthy gentlemen, if we doe consider that which hath beene spoken this day, we shall finde that *Possidonio* yester day preached vnto vs, not his owne nobilitie, but the honour of his predecessours; telling vs of the great combats, the worthy exploits, the trophées, the victories of his great grandfathers, the priuiledges, the spoiles, the images, the portraitures, and much other such light stuf, which was nothing to our purpose. And surely it seemed vnto mee, that I heard them who are woont in open streets to set forth the praises of other men, but to bee able to say nothing in their owne commendation. But inso much as we haue to consider, which of vs two is the most noble, from henceforth setting aside the nobilitie of our auncesters, because the ring in question was not giuen vnto him who shoulde deriue his nobilitie from most ancient predecessours, but to the most noble of vs two; denoting thereby the proper nobility belonging to our selues, and not y^e vvhich belongeth to other men: It seemeth vnto me a thinge very conuenient (for I think for all his weapons I need not fear any danger, but that I may walk whither I list) by litle & litle, to enter into the fruitful field of vertues & sciences; and to make it certainly known vnto you (y^e true & perfect nobility of man, dooth neither consist in antiquity of bloud, nor in wealth, but in the vertues of the mind) when I shall haue alleadged such reasons as my slender capacity, & y^e final time which is left me, wil

ATREATISE

will giue me leaue, albeit that to perswade you in this point, the reasones already rehearsed may seeme sufficient.

Whereunto *Fabricio* added some other words, and after he had a little taken breath, and called his wits together as one halfe weary already, he gaue this beginning to his future discourse.

Most worthy gentlemen. It was his pleasure, whose will doth moue the heauens, to create and frame all things we see in this world, to a certaine and due ende. The sunne (which for the most part doth shine vnto vs, and from the which lesser starres doe take their light) principally to shewe vnto vs the magnificence of his glory; and next for the profit of man. Likewise he created the earth, the water, the ayre, the fire, and other liuing creatures, for the vse of man. But man himselfe was formed for God, that soueraign and infinite good and not for any other thing here beneath on earth.

We know also by those motions we doe feele in our selues, that man is neuer thorowlie contented, albeit he haue vnder his power and dominion, whatsoever hee may especiallie wish or desire in this world: for though some one delight to haue children, or riches; or great offices, dignities, and honour, and that fortune doe fauor him in al his demands, yet is y^e desire of his minde neuer in rest, but hee still longeth couetously more and more, after somthing or other, bicause there is not here on earth any stability, nor the ende of any infinite good.

But man by the intellectual knowledge of his vnderstanding, gaining the infinite grace and excessive loue of him, who in himselfe is the infinitie of goodnes; his mortall desire is staid, & resteth it selfe; like vnto a stone which

which being cast on high, neuer resteth vntill it come to the bosome of the earth, which is the last end of the rest thereof. Now I say, that he is most perfit, and noble, who approacheth neereſt vnto this last end. Forasmuch as if I desire heate, surely how much the neerer I shall draw neerer vnto the fire, by so much shall I attain vnto my desire. Then to see who is y most noble, & most perfit of vs two, wee ought to consider, which of vs approacheth neereſt vnto the end hee was made for: For without doubt hee shall be deemed the most noble, and not he who is descended of most noble bloud. And as you knowe, that no man can attaine vnto any end, but by some meanes: The meanes wee haue to come thereunto, is vertue, which hath residence in the soule, and not in the bodie: and God made the soule vnto his likenesse, and not the body where it remaineth, which in it selfe doth onely resemble brutish beastes. If then *Possidonio*, thou doest enrich this thy body, with apparel, and with wealth, if thou doest fill it with daintie fare, and leauest thy soule without the ornament of vertue, and good conditions: surely thou doest not adorne thy selfe with perfit Nobilitie, as degenerating from the determinate end thereof. For man being framed of body and soule, his will shall either encline to the body or the minde: If to the bodie, because it was framed of earth, which draweth downwarde, hee cannot comprehend, nor desire any other thing but terrestriall, and earthly matters. If to the minde, because it is nothing but a celestiall spirite, he cannot couer after anie other thing, then to mount on high, where al perfection consisteth, and disdaineth fraile things which are on the earth.

But man ought to gouerne himselfe according vnto reason, not according as the bodie, but as his soule

A TREATISE

guideth him; the one being subiect vnto corruption, the other made to liue eternally.

Likewise, the ornamentes of the soule, as that is immortal, euen so are they, and those that set forth the body are corruptible, as the body is. Forasmuch as both the internall and externall goodes of the bodie, which consist in a iust proportio of members, in health, in force, in riches, in procreation of children, in building of pallaces, and such other things, are al fraile and transitorie, in as much as to day they haue their being, and in a moment are brought to the ground; whereas contrarily, the goods of the soule are durable, perpetuall, and eternall. You see then howe much the soule is farre more perfit and noble then the body. Wherefore, if thou desirest to please the body, and I determine to serue and obey the soule, I shall haue so much aduantage of the in nobilitie, as the one excelleth the other: as if I should say. Those thinges that doe set forth the soule, are vertues which a man doth irreuocablie poure into his minde, for vertue is a firme abiding affection of the minde, which causeth whosoever is possessed therewith, to deserue great praise. And whensoever it is not constant, it looseth the name of vertue, seeing that this stabilitie of affection by continuall vse, and practise, is changed into an habitude.

Some of these vertues doe consist in good maners and behauiour: others in the vnderstanding. The former doe consist in a meane, betweene two extreames: the latter, neither in extremitie, nor in a meane: as prudence, science, intelligence, and wisdom. Other some which by auncient writers are called morall vertues, are so many appetites, and desires as come into our minde. For if so bee that I am naturally addicted vnto women, or some other aboue measure desirous
of

of daintie fare: Or else, if when reason commandeth, I doe abstaine from looking on a woman, or that other, from his meate, surely both of these in vs is a vice. Vertue then considering the middle of these extreames, with a strong bridle ouerruleth these inordinate appetites, which a man can hardly withstand at the first assault, because hee cannot so well at the first temper the naturall motions of the fleshe, nor refrayne the insatiable desire of the belly.

The like I may say of diuerse and sundrie desires of man, which cause him to fall into abhominable vices. Now if Vertue did not oppose it selfe against vice, I doubt not but our estate shoulde whollie resemble, if it were not worse then the life of beastes voide of reason.

There are besides other vices, which man beeing ouertaken withall, perswading himselfe they proceede from vertue, hee falleth headlong into them. As if I should extreamely thirst after honor and dignitie: And thou shouldest shewe thy selfe ouer liberall in spending thy goods; If this man should rashly thrust himself into the midst of a fray. In these vnbrideled appetites, albeit they seeme good, because that to be placed in honour, to bee liberall, and a man of courage, haue the apparence of good thinges, yet notwithstanding they are vitious, and ought to bee auoided. Forasmuch as my desire leaneth to ambition, thine to prodigalitie: and the rashe courage of the other, to foolish hardnesse.

Likewise who so vseth the contrarie of these, is no lesse worthie of blame; For if I beeing worthy, did disdainfully refuse a place of dignitie: Or thou diddest withhold thy hand ouer straitely in the distribu-

A TREATISE

distributing of thy goodes where neede were; and the other being vrged by his enemies, did play the coward: Surely both the former & the latter sort of men, which tie themselves to those extreames, are vitious, and ought to be auoided: as in like maner hee is, who doth either hide, or debarre his companion of those things, which in reason hee may affoord him. Wherefore to moderate this my vnbrideled desire of the flesh, or his vnordinate feeding, there commeth a vertue, named *Temperance*, which by reason doth appease, and ouerrule the vnruely appetites of man. How greatly is *Philoxenes* to be blamed, who being enchanted by the desire of eating, wished aboue all other things, that his neck were as long as the necke of a crane, that he might feed with the more pleasure: and *Semiramis* queene of the Assyrians, who so dissolutely abandoned her selfe vnto the pleasures of the flesh, that beeing deprived of all sence and vnderstanding, she sought carnally to couple her selfe with her sonne *Ninus*? Surely verie much, as they who in guise of men did liue intemperately like beasts. This vertue doth not onelie temper those delightes, which are common with vs and brute beastes: but it doth likewise appease sorrow, from whence doth spring gracious modestie, inuiolate continencie, moderate sobrietie, honest chastitie, and other good workes.

In like maner to temperate his furious temeritie, who inconsideratly thrusteth himselfe amidst his enemies, or his faintnesse of heart, who beeing assailed by his aduersarie, doth flie from him: Fortitude doth step in place, a worthy vertue, which obtaineth the meane betweene foolish hardinesse, and feare. The rashnesse of *Phaeton* gaue him courage to gouerne his fathers chariot, although he altogether wanted skill thereto: and encouraged *Icarus* to flie in the aire. Which maketh

keth me affirme that the valiaunt man ought to dread no daunger, no not death it selfe, nor any other thing when need requireth, hauing due consideration of the place; the time, and the maner how he enterpriseth any thing: but he ought to feare that, which if hee shoulde not dread, would cause him to be contemned, as dishonour, enuy, the chastitie of his wife, and suche other thinges, as who so feareth is honest, and iealous of his reputation. Likewise that ought to be feared which passeth the force of man, for he is no lesse worthy of reprehension, who dreadeth that which hee ought to feare, then he who feareth that which he ought not to dread. As wee reade of *Artemon* the Grecian, who was so fearefull, that he neuer stirred not so much as out of his house, but two of his seruantes continuallie held an yron buckler ouer his head, fearing least something shoulde fall vpon him: or if any thing did fall, that hee might be the better defended from it: and if at any time he went abroad, he was carried in a litter wel couered. This vertue then doth cause men to expose themselues with consideration to such dangers as doe happen, and patiently to suffer labour and sorrowe, which is a farre harder matter for a man to doe, then to abstaine from pleasure. Heerehence doth spring magnificence, which is so much commended, tollerable patience, firme perseuerance, and magnanimitie of courage. But to bridle the euill disposition of him, who after a tyrannical sorte doth occupie that which by right doth belong vnto another his equall: therein Iustice doth offer it selfe, which is a vertue farre more excellent then any other, beeing either vniuersall, or particular.

Vniuersall iustice is that, which within it selfe doth containe the two foresaid vertues, and is farre more
O noble

A TREATISE

noble then they are : by Iustice good lawes are obserued, which doe dispose men, and make them fit to doe good actions, and vpon deserued penaltie doe prohibite men from wickednesse.

This vertue doth containe the vse, and habitude of other vertues, wherefore by good reason it is called perfect, and vniuersall, especially inasmuch as if temperance be good, that shall onely bee profitable for him that possesseth it; and so I may say likewise of Fortitude: but Iustice is common, and vniuersall to al men, and as a vertue descended from aboue, it shineth as a heauenly light. Particular Iustice, no lesse to be commended then other vertues, consisteth in equitie (for we ought in the same maner to accompt both of commoditie and discommoditie) and in the obseruation of faith in thinges promised. Nowe of this vertue doth proceede the obseruation of lawes, trueth, pietie, obedience, and likewise liberalitie, which holding the middle betweene spending and sauing, doth restraine the vice of prodigalitie, and couetousnesse: For like as the prodigall man is carelesse in getting, and lauish in giuing: So the couetous man is ouer carefull in heaping vp riches, and too nigardly in spending. Neither is the auaritious man farre vnlike to the miserable ambitious person, betweene whom, and this other who despiseth honour beeing worthy thereof, there commeth a vertue considering the meane, of the which ariseth magnanimitie of courage.

I could bring you infinite examples fitting this purpose, which I doe forbear, least my speach should be ouer long, intending likewise to returne to discourse of intellectuall vertues: and first of all to shewe you, that some of the foresaide morall vertues, cannot be without prudence, which consisteth in those thinges, which
are

are subiect to chaunge, beeing sometimes after this fashion, sometimes after another : Herehence proceedeth counsell, and election. As for example, if thou shouldest offer vnto mee manie good thinges, and manie euill thinges, counselling me, whether of them should be especially, either of the good more profitable, or of the euill thinges more hurtfull : Thorough prudence I woulde make choice of that which were most commodious, and least dangerous, thereby ordering thinges present, remembring thinges past, and foreseeing thinges to come. On Prudence, reason, vnderstanding, and discretion attendeth. Thorough Science, which consisteth in firme, and true thinges, wee knowe, and vnderstand the conclusion, wherevnto it aspireth, leauing the principles to bee considered of by intelligence : For in searching out, if God be the Soueraigne good, knowing it thorough Science, I seeke to vnderstand what God is. Afterwardes by Wisedome I comprehend the principles, and that which proceedeth of them : whereof by good right, it is named the true knowledge of diuine and humane thinges.

The vertues of the minde being then the ornament of the soule, which is the subiect of the saide vertues, they are (as I said) the meanes to attaine vnto the end wee shoote at. He shall be then most Noble, hee shall be most perfite, and amongst mortall men most renowned; which being adorned with the vertues I haue recited, shall approach neere vnto this Soueraigne, and infinite good. We see that the water is more noble then the earth, the aire then the water, and the fire then the aire, because it is neerer therunto then any of the other Elementes.

The like is to be obserued in the orders of Angels,
O. 2, which

A TREATISE

which are deuided into three Hierarchies, and the Hierarchies into so many Thrones: Inasmuch as that is the most worthie Hierarchie, which approcheth neereſt vnto the creator of heauen. Now the Seraphins (as being neereſt vnto God, forasmuch as no Angelicall ſpirite dooeth not contemplate more immediatly his diuine eſſence then they doe) and the Cherubins with the Thrones which are ſeated in the firſt Hierarchie, doe exceede in perfection, and nobilitie, the Gouvernement, the Principalities, and the powers, which are in the ſecond Hierarchie. Theſe are more noble then the third, as being further off from the diuine preſence, in the number whereof are, the Vertues, the Archangels, and Angels. To ſpeake more plainly vnto thee *Poſidonio*, take me for example a Prince in Soueraigne degree of nobilitie, whoſe children haue iſſue, I demand if his children their iſſue ſhalbe accounted as noble as his owne: Surely no, becauſe they are a diſcent farther off from the Prince (from whom their nobilitie proceedeth) then the firſt iſſue from him: and ſo wee ought to eſteeme of the lower degrees. If then *oſidonio*, thou doeſt approch neereſt vnto the end whereunto we were framed, thy mind being ſo highly qualified with vertues, as I haue briefly recited to thee: I wil then yeeld vp my intereſt touching this cōtrouerſie, without debating y matter any more: in regarde of any nobility of bloud deriued frō thy anceſtors, which maketh as much for true nobilitie, as the light of a candle neere vnto the cleere ſunne-ſhine: But if I prooue vnto thee, that I doe come neereſt vnto this end, wilt not thou graunt me, that I am more noble then thou art, and that the victory belongeth vnto me? Surely thou canſt not ſay any thing to the contrary. I will ſufficiently declare vnto thee, that I come neereſt there-

thereunto hauing graced my life with vertues, vvhich are the only meanes to attaine vnto it.

Fabricio hauing spoken in this maner, and somewhat taken breath after his long discourse, turning himselfe againe towards the company, with a plyant voice, proceeded on this manner.

You see most worthy gentlemen, that by the verie matter of this discourse, I am constrained fullie to laie open my life vnto you, and consequently such vertues as are in me, and not other mens. Wherefore this final speech wil necessarily turne to my praise and commendation, contrary to my pretended purpose, bicause that true nobilitie, consisting (in my opinion) in the proper vertues of the minde, as I did most plainly prooue vnto you; I cannot declare, and much lesse make you vnderstande, whether I am noble, or not, except I recount them vnto you: for this respect (and God knoweth how willingly) I had rather that heereafter some other should take the matter vpon him for me, as likewise bicause I would not that any should girde at me therfore: which in friendlie maner I beseech you may not be denied me, seeing that I am constrained thereunto, and that it lyeth vpon mee vainly to set foorth mine owne praises, and to tax another man. Howsoeuer it happen, trusting in your vertues, I will freely embolden my self, with the greatest breuitie that I can, to sette foorth my praises vnto you.

I then being in my childish years, after that my tung began by little and little to vntie it selfe, instructed in precepts of vertue, I say I began to adorne my life, and my mind with such qualities, as were fittest for my tender age: and likewise my young mind beeing capeable of vnderstanding, my memorie of retaining, and my wit apt for learning, I gaue my selfe to the pleasant stu-

A TREATISE

die of humanitie; where I did not onelie lay vp in my memorie the remembrance of manie fables, and manie histories, but likewise the knowledge of mans life, by the which I might easilie discerne for the ornament and dutie of my life, what waie was to be auoided, and which was to be followed. And longing further to attaine to the knowledge of the Artes and Sciences, and not onelie of them by which vvee doe discerne that which is false, from the troth; and of those other by vvvhich vve are made partakers of the vnderstanding, both of matters naturall and heauenlie : but especiallie desiring to embrace moral philosophie (which if (vve vvil giue credite vnto *Cicero* and others) wise *Socrates*, leauing the studie of natural philosophie, as lesse profitable to cōuerse one with another in this world, broght from heauen to earth) I vvvas constrained to leaue my Countrie, and my parentes, to trauaile thither vvhere all liberall exercises are maintained, euerie dull vvitt is instructed, and euerie harde vnderstanding softened. There did I beautifie my vnderstanding, and my mind with knowledge and vertue, in so large measure as I need not nowe to declare vnto you.

By this meanes *Possidonio* doe I belecue, that a man becommeth renouvvmed and noble. By vertue accompanied with worthie sciences, the mind of man is made noble and excellent. Vertue is that which tempereth a man that is of a milde nature, graceth him with honest and courteous conditions, maketh him prudent and wise, and finallie of a mortal man, immortal. That is the onely meanes by which we attaine to the perfect knowledge of him, who is the last ende and marke wee aime at.

I saie vertue is that wherewith the soule being beautified, doth cause vs to approach to the ende wee were made

made for, and consequentlie maketh vs partakers of the light therof. He that is a true noble man doth not shine, (neither ought he to shew himselfe by means of any other beames,) then those that spring and growe from vertue.

Now thou mayest be able hereafter to knowe *Possidonio*, from whence true Nobilitie of the minde dooth proceed, and to perceiue likewise, if learning is vaine or rather necessary, yea and the Sciences themselues, for the aduancement of nobilitie. Now thou mayst vnderstande, how much learning is to be esteemed aboue riches, by those that are perfect noble men. But besides the examples I haue already alleadged, I will yet moreouer giue you to vnderstand, how highlie it hath beene accounted of by other men of olde time.

For asmuch as onlie by the Poet *Euripides* his going to *Syracusa*, the *Syracusans* who had vnder their power many Athenian prisoners, they gaue them all their libertie, bicause they had learned without booke manie verses of *Euripides* who was an *Athenian* by birth. Bee you now the iudge, what greater guift they might haue presented to the Author of these verses.

And diuine *Plato* being by *Denis* the Tyrant, called from Athens into *Sicilia*, which voyage hee made by Sea, he no sooner set foote on land, but he was by him receiued in a triumphant chariot, and after that maner he entered the citie.

Surely *Denis* did not this honour neither to the wealth of *Plato*, nor to the worthinesse of his bloud, but to his deepe skill and vertue. *Alexander* of *Macedonia*, hauing giuen *Darius* King of *Persia* the ouerthrowe, amongst the kinges treasure hee founde a most pretious little casker, enriched with gold & pretious stones, wherein the Persian K. was wont to preserue his

A TREATISE

his most pretious and odoriferous ointmentes: but Alexander, put neither ointment nor pretious Iewel, nor any of his treasure therein, but the poetickall workes of *Homer* the Grecian, imagining he had not in al his treasure, a iewel of greater value, which did better deserue to be locked vp there.

The reason hereof was not because *Homer* was born of any noble stock, or that he had been of great wealth (for scarce was any man of so lowe estate in regarde of riches) but in respect of his diuine knowledge and vertue. If then the true estimation of man, proceedeth from vertue and knowledge, whoe dare then affirme, that they doe not make him noble, who is vertuous, of good behauiour, and wise, albeit he be not descended of any noble bloud? Surely he should be a wicked person, vicious, and foolish, that should iudge otherwise. For he whom thou dost call and deeme to bee noble, hath onelie the apparance of a noble man: but those I speak of are noble indeed, in asmuch as their vnderstanding is made noble, the which doth afterward send forth the light thereof, for the ornament of our life. If thou art of this making *Possidonio*, I will iudge thee a perfect Noble man, but not in regard thou art onely descended of a noble stocke.

And truely both thy actions, and theirs likewise, who at this day do vaunt themselues of the nobility of their bloud, are wholly disposed and readie to followe the vanities and pleasures of the body, which laste but for a while, and not the seruice of the soule which is eternall and euerlasting. Bloud then auaieth nothing to true & perfect nobilitie; & how little it maketh for thee, I haue already declared: for that which the vulgar sort esteemeth nobilitie of bloud, hath no other good thing in it selfe, but a facilitie, and sleight to make one Noble.

O

O how many are there, whom this nobilitie of bloud, being considered in man without any other qualitie, of noble, maketh them base! For it is nourished with ignorance, fed with pride, increased with audacitie, liueth with temeritie, ruled with lightnesse, brought vppe in thestes, robberies, wantonnesse, violence, blasphemie, euil speech; & to conclude, continued in vanitie, which is an enimie to knowledge, a traitor to vertue, and contrarie to true nobilitie.

Imagine now *Possidonio*, how noble and perfect this thy Nobilitie of bloud is, thorough the which thou persuadest thy selfe, thou hast attained to the highest degree of Nobilitie that may be imagined, whereas thou art lowest of all other, whereinto the foolish opinion of the vulgar sort doth easilie cause thee to fall: forsomuch as without any difference at all, they call those Noble men, who haue but onely a shadow of Nobilitie, as well as they, who are true noble men. Consider how light and carelesse the miserable beleefe of mortall men is, and howe it is openly deceiued. I say then *Possidonio*, that thou art not noble, and that in thee can no markes of true Nobilitie bee seene, but rather a shadowe, or to say the troth, a meer & bare name of Nobility. VVhich if it be so, as I haue made manifest vnto you (and surely it is so, and cannot be otherwise) I may saie in arguing after this manner. That by how much the effect is far more perfect, and more commendable then the name of any thing whatsoever; by so much I am, and so doe deeme my selfe more noble then thou art: and howe farre the effect excelleth the name, is euident of it selfe. For asinuch as if I desire rather effectually to bee learned, then so taken, as I know thou couetest to be rich, then to be called wealthy.

Whereby thou mayest now well perceiue, in what

P

case

A TREATISE

case thou art, albeit yesterday thou wert of beleefe, after thou haddest recited so manie fables for prooffe of thy nobilitie, that I shuld haue nothing to speak against thee this day, but thou mayest hereafter iudge better whether I had any thing to say or no: for to goe thorough with that which offereth it selfe to bee spoken herein, much more time then is now left vnto vs wuld not suffice to handle the matter. Wherefore I will proceed further.

Now considering (gracious gentlemen) that vvhich *Posidonio* intended yesterdaie, vvhhen as he said, that he is a true and perfect noble man, because hee is descended of noble parents. Suppose the case that his proposition were true, y vvhosoeuer is borne of a noble stock is a noble man, if I did denie that hee were issued of noble familie, vvhhat could he say vnto me? Tell me *Posidonio*; if so be I should deny that thou wert ingendred of noble bloud, vvhhat wouldest thou answere me? what certainty wouldest thou giue me thereof? Surely thou wvouldest long goe groping in the darke before thou couldst ascertain me thereof, and vvwouldst neuer be able to proue it vvith sound reasons, by vvhich I should be constrained of necessitie to beleue it. If then vvee are not certaine of thy birth, it followeth that thy nobilitie ought rather to bee called credible then certaine.

Wherefore I may very well say thus much. That euen as a certaine and true thing, is farre more perfect then that, which vve onelie beleue to be certaine: So is my nobilitie farre more certaine than thine, because it is to be beleued indeed, and not to bee presumed onelie, that I am noble, in regard that the true essence of nobilitie remaineth in me.

Thou wvouldest then say perhaps (quoth one of the
young

young Ladies, vvho was offended with the last wordes of *Fabricio*, because she vvvas a kinswoman vnto *Possidonio*) that hee is not his fathers sonne, seeing there is no more certaintie of his birth then thou affirmest? Truly *Fabricio* thou art false into a greater error. As though wee knewe not what house hee is come of? Thou shouldest not so openlie alleadge that which is false to prooue thy argumentes as pleaseth thee, for it doeth ill become thee: and now I hold that which *Possidonio* affirmed for troth; and that thou wouldest with thy subtile Sophistrie make vs beleue, that white is blacke.

Scarce had the young Ladie ended hir wordes, but all the company began to laugh, with such earnestnes, that their heartes were sore therewith; and she imagining that they mocked her demanded saying. But I pray you vvhereat doe you laugh? Suddenlie the Lady *Aurelia* answered, who vvould not laugh to heare thee say so simply that *Possidonio* is not his fathers sonne, as though he could be begotten without a father?

The young lady halte angry, and with shame dying her cheeks with vermillion, like vnto the morning rose, said onely, I know wel enough what I meane; wherunto *Fabricio* answered smilingly.

I know he is his fathers sonne, but I am not certaine vvwhether he were his father, whom all we do imagine, or no: and it is to no purpose to say, that his father called him sonne, or any such like tales, for that can in no wise make me assured thereof.

We may then (quoth she, not regarding their laughter) by this reason, say the like of al that are here present.

It is true Madam (qd *Fabricio*.) Alas poor soule that I am (qd she) euer since I was borne, I haue hitherunto bin sure who was my father, & likewise held my mother

A TREATISE

for an honest woman, and nowe thou makest a doubt thereof.

How great laughter began againe amongst them al, both men and women, you may easilie coniecture; but after they were all quiet, *Fabricio* proceeded on further in this manner.

Madam, I will grant vnto you, that *Possidonio* is descended of noble parentes, and consequently that his nobilitie is certain: yet is not that nobilitie more praise worthy which a man obtaineth by his owne labor and trauaile, and thorough his owne vertues, then that hee receiueth from others? Surely not a little. And whether of the two wilt thou iudge to be more noble, either thy selfe *Possidonio*, or thy predecessors, who were the beginners and first founders of this thy Nobilitie? For they were most valiant men at Armes, and as thou diddest yesterday conclude, and I do grant thee, they were pleasing, and well accepted of their Princes: now surely wilt thou iudge thy selfe more noble then they, who dooest onelie represent their nobilitie, I belecue that without any contradiction, thou wilt giue them the vpper hand. You may see now, how much more the nobilitie which any man doth purchase vnto himselfe, is farre more perfect then that which he taketh from his ancestors. Mine being of that sort, without doubt it is more perfect and more noble then thine. If I would henceforward strike the sailes of my ship, and cast anchor to staie my selfe, without passing any further, I should thinke I were arriued at the wished hauen, and hitherunto to haue made as much waie as is necessarie for our enterprise: but seeing the western wind bloweth on me with a pleasant gale, and that the sea is calme, & affoordeth me a prosperous nauigation, my heart will not suffer me as yet to strike saile, but I will by little and little put out further.

The

The great Monarch of heauen, and good guide of the earth (worthy gentlemen) hauing here beneath in this world created all thinges, it pleased him in the end amongst all other liuing creatures, which hee had framed, to forme one, who being the most perfit, and most noble of all others, should haue the dominion of all other thinges hee had before created, and to him (albeit that he was made and framed of earth, as the scriptures doe witnesse) he gaue reason, by which he should rule, and gouerne himselfe. Men were borne, and so they are yet at this day, as some do beleue, with equall mindes, with equall powers, and with equall vertues. Because nature, as wel to the riche as to the poore, to the noble man, as to the peasant, to the mightie as to the weake, hath giuen reason and vnderstanding, and brought them all naked into the worlde. And who is he, how poore, abiect, and miserable soeuer, who at his first beginning, had not a minde, like vnto the minde of euery Prince or king? Surely no man. We wil say then, that nature wherof thou diddest make such great brags, yesterday, doth not bring forth one man better, or more noble, then other.

Now all men being equall by birth, vertue was that which first of all did distinguish them, and made a difference betweene man and man, because that whosoever shewed himself most familiar, and deuout towards her, was called noble, and the rest remained ignoble. And whosoever he was that did first of all inuent this word Nobilitie, he denoted thereby a singularitie, and separation from other men. For Nobilitie is as much to say, as a note or marke, and a noble man, as a man more noted, and knowne, then any others. By reason whereof, man hauing by the height and value of his courage, made prooffe of many laudable actions, and

A TREATISE

worthieworkes, hee commeth to be separate from the vulgar sort, and knowne more plainly, whereupon it pleased the first inuenter, to terme this separation, and this knowledge, Nobilitie. And to say the truth, it was not without apparent reason: for if wee looke into the effect and substance of this Nobilitie, we shall find that therein which I haue recited, Forasmuch as Nobilitie is no other thing (without intermedling with y^e which *Possidonio* alleaged yesterday: For I haue this day prooued how true that is) I say Nobilitie is nothing else, but an excellencie, by the which things that are most worthy, do take place before those that are lesse worthy. We see amongst the planets (for his perfect excellencie) y^e sun is more noble, and hath preheminance aboue al other planets, being of lesse worth: Amongst stones the diamond: amongst mettals, gold: amongst greater stones, the Phorphir. Euen the like is in man: for hee is more noble and worthy then other, who is most excellent and perfit amongst them: which excellencie and perfection, is deriued from the nobilitie of the vnderstanding, and not from the body, to seperate man from brute beasts, as I said before. Wel may you perceiue by this, that vertue in man is that which maketh him Noble and excellent, & causeth him to be preferred before others, and not bloud, nor riches, as thou didst affirme *Possidonio*. And euen as man is far more excellent and noble then any other liuing creature; so by this excellencie & vertue of the minde, one man is more worthy, and more excellent then another. Now if hee is noble who with his owne vertues hath made the excellencie which is in himselfe manifest, what excellencie hast thou euer shewed to be in thee, tel me what greatnes, & what vertue is in thy mind? And who knoweth not this, that without great labor, a man cannot attaine to anie
worthy

worthy action, or laudable deed. Beleeue not *Possidonio*, that remaining continually idle as thou dooest and pampered in daintinesse, that thou art like ever to prooue a noble man, which thou diddest yesterday declare in reciting the liues of thy predecessors, which did neuer spare neither cold, nor heat, nor fire, nor trauell in the world, to the end they might not only take y name of Nobilitie vpon them, but the effect likewise, and hauing taken it, keep and conserue it. By such means man may aduance himselfe, and become noble and renowned amongst others, & not by blood. Writers report more of the vertue which *Iulius Cesar* shewed in Germanie and France, then of his birth. Neither doe they so much write what blood *Octavius Augustus* was come of, as they haue done of y ouerthrow he gaue to *M. Antonius*, & *Cleopatra*, neer to the mountain *Actium* in Epire, & of other his worthy actiōs, by which he brought into his subiection al Spain towards the West, the *Tartarians* & the *Sarmatians* towards the North, the *Indians* towards the East, the *Parthians*, y *Armenians*: *Tygranes* king of the *Medes*, the inhabitants of *Bosphorus* & of *Propontis*, & those of either side the *Rhin*, and of the *Danube*, with infinit other nations: Of *Pompey* the great, the son of *Pompey*, *Strabo* doth recite his triūphs: especially y which he had in Affrique against *Domitiā*. The deliuerance y *Brutus* freed his countrey from, whē he did driue frō thence *Tarquin* y proud, with his successors, was cause that he was named the father of the *Romane* liberty: the like is said of y other *Brutus*. *Fabius Maximus* was likewise rightly called the defender of the commonwealth, when he bridled the fierce courage of *Anniball* of *Carthage*. The wonderful ouerthrow, that *Claudius Nero* gaue y *Carthaginians*, when he presented *Asdrubal* his head to his brother, do cause vs to remember him; not y blood nor the generosity of his ancestors.

A TREATISE

The great value of *Horatius*, who gaue the people of Rome their libertie, when as hee alone standing on the bridge, did resist the *Tuscanes*. The glorious Trophees, and many victories which *Camillus* the great obtained against the *Falisci*, are recommended vnto vs : especially those which in his exile he had against the *Gaules*, who had forcibly taken and burned the citie of Rome. Likewise in this his expedition hee gloriously vanquished the *Volsci*, the *Latines*, the *Equi*, the *Erinqui*, with other Nations. Of *Tyberius Gracchus*, who also subdued the *Gaules*. Of *Paulus Emilius*, who conquered the *Gaules* that dwelt on both sides the *Alpes*. Of *Paulus Emilius* his sonne, who hauing brought *Liguria* into subiection, ouerthrewe, and tooke *Perseus* king of *Macedonia*. Of *Marcus Claudius Marcellus*, who surmounted and slue *Viridimarus* king of the *Gaules*. Of all these there is nothing spoken of their Nobilitie, or of their bloud, or of their descent.

The wonderful deeds which both the *Scipiones* did, as well in Spaine, as in Affrique, and Asia, for the which the one was called *Scipio Africanus*, the other *Asiaticus*, doe cleerely manifest their renowne while the worlde doth stand in euerie place, and not their familie. The value of *L. Martins*, who succeeded those two, against *Gisgon* and *Magon*, gathered the Romaine army together, which was all broken, and valiantly ouercame the enemies. Likewise the vertues of *Scipio Nasica*, were such, that besides the victorious triumphs he obtained ouer his aduersaries, he was rightly iudged by the Senate, to be the worthiest of the Romaines, and that not in regard that hee was descended of the most noble stocke of Rome. And if I would so farre forth enlarge my discourse, as well I might concerning this matter by true, and no fabulous examples : surely neither

ther time, nor my tongue woulde serue me to expresse them. Thou maiest see then *Possidonio*, that so manie auncient trumpets as doe resound in the world, do not set forth neither the worthinesse of bloud, nor the antiquitie of linage, nor the rich pallaces of so many worthy knightes, but their notable vertue, their wonderful prowesse, and their singular greatnesse of courage. The bloud of that diuine *Plato*, or of learned *Aristotle*, or of wise *Pythagoras*, of *Socrates*, of *Diogenes*, of *Xenophon*, of *Demosthenes*, of *Thales Milesius*, of *Chilon* the Lacedemonian, of *Pittacus*, of *Bias*, of *Cleobulus*, of *Periander*, whose wisdome did beautifie Greece, nor of other Philosophers, by whose learning the secrets of Nature haue been opened vnto vs, was not so glorious and renownmed, as their vertue, of great fame. What doe wee heare of the birth of *Homer* the Grecian, or of *Virgil* of Mantua? What of that eloquent *Cicero*? What of the offspring of famous *Titus Liuius* of Padua? of *M. Varro*? Or of *Crispus Salustius*? What of the stocke of *Plinie* of *Verrona*? and of all they, who by their learning are at this day renownmed in the world? Truely nothing at all. But of their diuine skill, their arte and vertue, all men haue written and spoken. Therehence proceedeth that excellencie by the which one man is to bee preferred before another. From thence springeth that dignitie, which causeth one man to bee distinguished and knowne from another: Therehence proceedeth that true knowledge which maketh a Noble man: from thence groweth that separation and diuision betweene man and man, causing the one to bee esteemed Noble, gentle, and accomplished, and the other ignoble, abiect and vile. To conclude, from thence true nobilitie hath his beginning.

You may see nowe *Possidonio*, of what small ac-

Q

compt

A TREATISE

compt bloud is in matter of Nobilitie. It is then necessarie for him, whosoever hee be that desireth to become Noble, to beautifie his minde, with good and vertuous actions. I say his minde, which is as readie and apt to take the impression of Nobilitie, as a faire looking glasse, which doth as well receiue the beautiful forme of faire Ladies, as the ill countenance of ill fauoured women, so the minde of man is prepared to receiue, either Nobilitie, or basenesse. For as it adorneth it selfe either with good or bad conditions, so doth it present them vnto them.

Consider a man whose minde is iust, couragious, temperate, prudent, pitifull, charitable, and louing, graced with all vertues: and another whose minde is vniust, vnconstant, lauish, foolish, cruel, wicked, hateful, and disgraced with all vice: wilt not thou iudge the first, more noble and perfit (albeit he be not descended of some noble parents) then the latter?

And what if some times the first were but meanlie apparelled, and the latter did weare costly garmentes, wilt thou say that hee were more noble, of more account, and worthy of more estimation? no surely as I thinke: for I perswade my selfe, thou hast now changed thy opinion: And that thou wilt not fall into that error which many doe, who belecue that he ought to be more esteemed & more honoured then others, who is well apparelled. For if thou diddest put costly rayment vpon a porter or some such fellowes backe, perhaps he would seeme a farre more proper man, then a great manie such gentlemen: and yet I hope you will not say hee is a noble man. For example heereof, take *Diogenes* the prince of the Senicall sect, who went alwaies barefoot, with an old patched cloke on his shoulders,

ders, & in this maner was he found in Crania, by *Alexander* the great when he went to visite him : as we said of late. Such a kinde of habite did not giue commendation either to his wisedome, or his nobilitie. *Epaminondas* that famous Prince, and leader of the Thebane armies, did alwaies weare an old worne gown; which because he did neuer vse anie other, hee caused it oftentimes to be mended, whilest in the meane time he kept his house. You may now know hereafter, that true and perfit Nobilitie, is deriued from no other fountaine, then the vertues of the minde, and not from the worthinesse of bloud.

Here *Fabricio* paused a while, and afterwarde followed on his discourse in this maner.

Consider *Possidonio*, that poore apparell doth not defraud a man of his demerites. And like as wee haue concluded, that true Nobilitie descendeth from the vertues of the minde, and not from the dignitie of bloud: So then wee will yet conclude, that it doth not worke his effect, no not in riches. Forasmuch as if wee would maintaine this opinion of thine, that riches are not onely an ornament, but rather necessarie to the bringing forth of perfit nobilitie; it shoulde followe that pouertie, should make a man base and abiect, and as an enemy of true Nobilitie, it ought to be banished: but hee is greatly to be blamed who is of this opinion: Forasmuch as pouertie is not to be contemned, nor eschued, for such is the passion it bringeth vs, as is the mind that receiueth it. For if the mind of man be addicted to y^e which is contrarie vnto it, that is vnto riches, it breedeth no delight, nor pleasure, but cruell bondage, and infinite labour, and as a traitour to rest and quietnesse, doth miserably afflict the thoughtes of man.

A TREATISE

And of this beleefe art thou *Possidonio*, for because thy minde longeth after riches, thou perswadest thy selfe that pouertie is cause of all mischief, whereas in deede the euill ariseth of thy vnbrideled affection, which is buried in riches, and not of pouertie. But if the mind of man be not drowned in riches, pouertie shall be verie pleasant, and delightfull vnto him, and his minde shall be ioyfull, and at libertie.

Democritus, beeing nourished with pouertie, gaue as a gift vnto the common wealth of Athens his infinite wealth, imagining hee might farre better followe his studie, with pouertie, then seruile subiect himselfe vnto riches. Like vnto him were *Diogenes*, and *Anaxagoras*.

What shall I say of *Phocion* of *Athens*, especially worthie all honour and glorie; who albeit hee had twentie seuerall times been Emperour of the Athenians: yet did hee in such sort loue pouertie, that the Ambassadours of *Alexander* the great comming vnto him, and bringing as a present, a great quantitie of golde, they found his wife kneading of dowe, and himselfe drawing water, whereby they deemed him to be verie needie, and yet notwithstanding he did refuse so rich a gift; esteeming that to liue with pouertie, did bring greater tranquillitie vnto man, then to possesse great treasure. Surely more ioyfull, and worthie of greater glorie, was the life of *Aristides* the Athenian, with his welbeloued pouertie, then the condition of *Callias* his fellowe Citizen, with his abundant wealth.

And tell mee *Possidonio*, what vilenesse did the pouertie of *Quintus Cincinnatus*, and *Attilius Ser-
ranus*, men of excellent Vertues, bring vnto them? Who tilling the grounde, and sowing their corne,
were

were worthilie chosen by the Senate to be the conductors of the Romaine armie : and those selfesame hands which did guide the plough, became rulers of chariots of triumph.

The apparant pouertie of *M. Curius*, a man of singular value, was no reproch vnto him, but rather made him worthy of eternall glorie, who after he had triumphed ouer the *Samnites* and the *Sabines*, returned to his poore cottage which was not capable of his greatness, whither the ambassadors of the *Samnites* bringing vnto him a great summe of golde to make their pacification with the *Romaines*, they found him sitting before the fire vpon a country stoole, eating in a wooden dish : and neuerthelesse he sent back their treasures after them, saying, y he desired rather in his pouerty to command ouer those that were rich, then to become rich himselfe; words well beseeming his magnanimitie of courage.

Equall to this man in poorenesse, and stoutnesse of mind, was *Fabricius Lucinus*, who likewise refused the guiftes of the *Samnites* : neither yet were the treasures of *Pirrhus* king of *Epire*, which were offered vnto him, with the fourth part of his substance, sufficient to make him loose one iot of his value, albeit he was very poor. So manifest was *Attilius Regulus* his pouertie, that he coulde no more gouerne the empire in *Affrike*, because at Rome his children hadde not wherewithall to maintaine themselves.

But tell me *Possidonio*, doost thou deeme that these men for all their pouertie were not noble? God forbid, nay contrary, the singular vertue of their minde, made them most noble. Whereby thou mayst plainly perceiue, that if nobilitie may remaine with pouertie, and pouertie with nobilitie, together in one subiect, whie

A TREATISE

diddest thou yesterday persuaue the contrarie; esteeming that pouertie could aswell agree with Nobilitie, as fire and water together? And that his felicity is greater (if so bee man can attaine to any on earth) whose mind resteth contented with pouertie, then his happines, who hath attained to the height of worldly welth, and lordly authoritie: the disposition of *Alexander* the great may serue for prooffe, who commaunding ouer the greater part of the worlde, because *Anaxagoras* told him that there were many worldes, hee lamented greatly in his presence, that he had not fully as yet conquered one.

And *Apollo* may serue for witnesse heereof, whose beeing demaunded by *Giges* king of *Lidia*, a prince of mighty power and wealth, if there were any man on earth more happy than he was, by Oracle made answer, that *Aglauis Sofides* the poorest man of all *Arcadia* was more happie, because euen vntill his latter age hee had liued with contented pouertie, with a mind full of quiet. By the which wee may vnderstand, that pouerty bringeth no reproch vnto nobilitie, and consequently that riches are not the ornament, nor any necessary parte thereof.

If then, worthines of bloud be not necessary in matter of nobilitie, as with most euident reasons, and manie plain examples of diuers, who albeit they were descended of noble and royall bloud, were yet iudged ignoble, (as this day I haue plainly shewed vnto you) and if riches, how infinite soeuer, doe not giue any grace or ornament therunto (as by the examples of many Noble and valiant Captaines I haue shewed vnto you) what manner of Nobilitie is then in *Possidonio*? Of what estimation shall wee account him? And if that pouertie bringeth no contempt to the greatnes of perfect nobility

lity, but contrarily doth exalt it : and that likewise the basenesse of bloud of our predeceffors, is no let vnto vs to becom noble, as not only by most pregnant proofs, but also by manifest examples of so many Popes, kings, Emperours, Consuls, Pretors, as by my discourse you haue heard, I haue caused you this day to vnderstande, who although they did descend of base parents, yet did they neuerthelesse by their deserts, mount vp vnto the foueraigne degree of nobilitie. It followeth necessari- lie, that my nobilitie is farre more worthye, and farre more perfect then *Possidonios* is:

And if these examples bee not sufficient vholie to mooue you, at the least let the example of *Ventidius Bassus* perswade you, who drawing his birth from a base and poore stocke, was in his young yeares taken vvith his mother by *Pompeius Strabo*, when hee brought the Ascolains into subiection, and before his Chariot was with other bondmen ledde captiue thorough Rome : but hee growing into further age, that hee might the better haue wherewithall to maintaine his estate, hee gaue himselfe to buy Mules, and with them to carrie trauellers by the vvaie; by meanes whereof, he passed with Cesar into France, where he beganne to shew the greatnesse of his courage, he hauing during the Ciuill Warres many matters imposed vppon him of no smal importance, and did execute them all with great magnanimity, and great admiration.

For which his vertues, he was not onely intertained into Cesar his friendshippe, but moreouer, had great office bestovved vpon him, beeing first made Tribune of the people, and afterwarde Pretor. And albeit that in that time he was with M. Antonius iudged an enemy of the Romans by y^e senate, yet notwithstanding hauing made

A TREATISE

made his peace, hee did not onely obtaine the office of a Pretor, but he attained likewise the degree of *High Prelate*, and afterwards was aduanced to the dignitie of a Consul. This was that *Ventidius*, who beeing by M. *Antonius* made Generall of the Easte prouinces, put the Parthians to flight which were descended into Syria, and three sundry times gaue them great ouerthrowes, and was the first who in Rome triumphed ouer the Parthians. And after his death, was honourable buried by the Romans. What was his birth? what was his estate? what vvere his riches? vwho did of a bondslaue make him free? who exalted him to so great nobilitie? & to so great wealth? surely it was not the antiquitie of y^e bloud of his ancestors, nor his great welth, but the vertue of his minde. O worthy vertue vvhich possessing the mindes of men, dost exalt them euen to the skies!

Consider (Gentlemen) what let and reproch, the base birth of *Ventidius*, was vnto the glorie of his Nobilitie: Consider I pray you, if his issue from so meane a place, vvas any hinderance vnto him, to rise to so high honour. And belecue not *Possidonio*, that at this daie there is any limited ende set, by which a man may become noble; for euen as the noble families which at this day are in the vvorlde, haue hadde a beginning to make them noble; so may the ignoble without any let, attaine thereunto.

I may then conclude, that the basenesse of my bloud, nor the want of vvealth, are no let nor hinderance vnto mee to become noble. The worthines and vertue of man is that which maketh him noble. It maketh him rich, it exalteth him vnto the skies, and finally of a bond man, it setteth him free. VVherefore *Possidonio*, I need not feare though my auncestors, as thou diddest yesterday

day affirme, were scarce knowne, because I doubt not but that that vertue and learning vvhatsoeuer it be, that is in me, is of force sufficient to make those noble who shall hereafter issue from me, if so it be to be belceued, that any nobilitie resideth in bloud.

Doth it now seeme vnto thee, that I haue with my sophisticall arguments shewed white for blacke, whereof thou wert so much afraide; or made thee vnderstand the verie troth it selfe? And to the ende, I may more strongly perswade thee, thou must know this, that he is farre more noble, who being borne of base parentage, hath beautified his mind with vertue and good conditions, then he that is descended of a noble stock, being as wel qualified as the other.

This perhaps may seeme strange vnto thee *Possidonio*; yet will I make it very plaine. For no man will denie of any thing whatsoeuer, but the rewarde ought to counteruaile the paine that is taken: now hee vvhich is borne of base parentage taketh far more labor to become noble, then he that is descended of noble bloud: therefore he ought to receiue a greater recompence. That his labor is greater, cannot be denied. For he that is borne of noble bloud, is alwaies in the path to become noble, and is not put to that pain, to attaine to the perfectiō of nobility, as he is, who is born of no noble stock, inasmuch as the one findeth the waye open and free, whereas the other findeth it full of rockes and thornes. Now both of them hauing attained therunto, who will denie me, but that his nobilitie ought to be more esteemed, whose father was but a meane man, then the other? Surely not any man. Are these fables *Possidonio*? Doth it as yet seeme strange vnto thee? I hope not.

Howbeit I will proceed further, and say. That hee ought to be more worthy of praise, who giueth him-

A TREATISE

selfe vnto all worthy enterprises, not being forced nor constrained by any man, then he that addicth himself vnto such laudable actions by force and compulsion. Now he that is by bloud noble, is rather forced then otherwise by his owne vertues, to set forth his nobility, least that his fathers nobilitie do basely take end in him selfe, but rather that by him it may be maintained and conserued in his successors: whereas he which is born of no noble stock, is far more noble, and far more worthie of praise, then hee which is borne a Gent. although both of them be equal in vertue. Hast thou capacity to comprehend this reason *Possidonio*? Thou mayst now consider, if I vse any sophistry, as thou diddest doubt I wuld; for surely these are most manifest reasons, which I alledge for the troth, the which notwithstanding is manifest and cleere of it selfe.

Fabricio went stil forward in his discourse, when as M. *Peter Anthony* interrupting him, & turning towards him said.

This thy conclusion should be very great *Fabricio*, if it were as true as it is apparant, and as it seemeth thou dost affirme it for troth: For so much as that part is alwaies of most force and strongest (which cannot be denied) where two reasons do concur together then where there is but one. Nowe he that is of noble bloud, & innobled by his vertues, hath in him two sorts of nobility, the one of bloud, the other proceeding of vertue, which cannot be in him, whose father was nonoble man, albeit he be esteemed equall in vertues vnto the other: wherefore his nobility shall not bee so puissant and mightie. Which thou thy selfe didst affirme for true, when as to dissolue this argument (if my memorie serue me well) where *Possidonio* went about to proue that the magnificence and glory of a man, ought by reason to extend it selfe vnto his successors, thou didst confes, that if you

were both equall in vertue, *Possidonio* his nobility shuld bee greater then thine: whereas contrarily in this thy new conclusion, thou dost not only make them equall, but the one in a higher degree, then the other: wherefore we ought to conclude, that he that is borne of noble parents is far more noble. And likewise I cannot easily gather how this thy last reason doth well hang together, by which thou wouldst proue that he is vvorthe of greater honor, who without any necessity, doth employ himselfe in vertuous actions, then hee that is forced therunto. For this thy maxime is true, that of euery worthy enterprise a mans recompence ought to bee so much the greater, as the detriment & hurt which may come vnto him in executing thereof. Now vwho so is borne of noble blood, is worthy greater blame & dishonor, when he doth not maintain the nobility of his forefathers, then the ignoble by birth: therefore in cōseruing it, he ought to haue greater reward. By which reasons these thy two last conclusions, doe in my iudgment remain somewhat the weaker.

You take no smal matter vpon you *M. Peter Anthony*, answered *Fabricio*, if you seeke to boult out the troth of these your 2. propositions: for on both sides there may be spoken sufficiently; the troth whereof I would gladly knowe, if it were so necessarie vnto our purpose, or if it were not so late. It cannot be late (qd *M. Peter Anthony*) yes (qd y whole company) & so late as we shal not haue time to mount on horsback. How quickly is time slid avway (qd *M. Peter Anthony*) you may see *Possidonio*, how you make the hours soonerto passe away then vve thought for: as for mee, I did verily belecue wee might haue staied here a good vvhile, but seeing it is so, we wil for this euening let our riding alone.

I do not care much for riding abroad answered *Fabricio*, let vs follow on our purpose, & therewithall tur-

A TREATISE

towards *Possidonio*, he said. Worthy gentlemen, whatsoever thing is on earth, man iudgeth it either good, or euill, or holding a meane betweene both. I demaund then *Possidonio*, in which of these three qualities thou wouldest place true nobilitie? Not in the euil I trow, for then nobilitie should be euil. Nor in the mean, for then should it be sometimes good, and sometimes bad. Wee must then necessarily conclude, that it ought to be placed in that which is good. Consisting in that which is good, it must either be in the goods of the body, of fortune, or of the mind. If wee say that nobilitie consisteth in the goods of the body, as to be faire, to bee in health, or in the goods of Fortune, as in riches: it should then follow, that beautie, health, or riches ceasing, which 3. thinges are subiect to corruption, nobility would soone decay. We are then constrained to conclude, y^t it consisteth in the goods of the mind, which are vertues, as long since I affirmed. Besides we haue to consider, whether nobility consisteth in riches, or in man. If thou saiest *Possidonio*, that it consisteth in riches, besides that which I haue long since alledged, it should further follow, that looke which way a mans wealth were carried, they being most noble; thither should his nobilitie goe, which ought in no wise to be vttered. We must then conclude, that it remaineth in man. Being in man, it is either by nature, or by purchase. If by nature, it followeth that we are all equally noble; in as much as one man (as I said vnto you) was the beginner of all humane nature, of whom we are all descended, but that falleth not to be considered of. We will then say that it is gotten. But how is it purchased? surely by the proper vertues of the mind, and not by any other means. These are the reasons *Possidonio*, which I doe alledge in the behalfe of true nobilitie, doe they not seeme to be true?

Surely

Surely I cannot possiblie make the troth more plaine vnto thee, then I haue done to day.

But seeing the sunne beginneth more and more to hide it selfe, I cannot as I would, follow my pretended purpose: Howbeit I will rest satisfied with that which I haue effectually spoken hitherunto: for I was not by any necessitie constrained to say so muche. It onely remaineth for mee *Possidonio* to tell, to whom the ring ought to be adiudged, which I would willingly do, but that I know *Nennio* to be a iudge sufficient for a greater disputation then ours. And he may well in the wisdom of his vnderstanding discourse of the perfit qualitie, & noble condition of the ladie *Virginia*, by whom the ring which we desire was giuen. For she being most accomplished with vertue, of most noble behauiour, most worthy for her honour, it auaieth thee nothing to equall thy self vnto her in considering thy Nobilitie of bloud, or the quantitie of thy treasure: (for thou maiest haue well vnderstood how much they make for Nobilitie.) *Nennio* will likewise weigh her gentle words when she said: Let the most noble of you two take the ring, by the which shee did affirme that there was Nobilitie in both of vs, and yet that one was more noble then the other, and to the most noble she gaue it.

In thee the Nobilitie of bloud concurring, caused by thy predecessors, in me the Nobilitie of mind, wrought by my owne vertues: It shall be an easie matter, not onlie for *Nennio*, but for any other of any common capacitie to decide a matter of so small moment. Howsoeuer it be, it seemeth now vnto me high time, to end my discourse: and albeit I could not vter all that concerning this matter, which came into my conceit, and which might well haue been saide: neuerthelesse I will leaue off, as hauing contented my minde and quieted

A TREATISE

it: especially reposing my self vpon the iust iudgment of him, who to morrow, or at any other time when hee shall see good, may determine this our controuersie. Of whom I haue had that reputation, and so doe still hold him, that although I had not alleaged the one half of these reasons, yet had they been sufficient, to come to the knowledge of the trueth of this our disputation. And moreouer, whosoever doth well consider what hath been spoken yesterday, and this day, on both sides, he shall find nothing else, but an vnbrideled kind of life, to combate with a moderate liuing; Ignorance with knowledge; dissolutenesse with modestie, vertue and honestie to fight against their contraries: and whether of those two sides doe bring most ornament, and Nobilitie vnto man, is easily to be iudged.

They all knew, that *Fabricio* was come to the end of his discourse, and that he had nothing else to say: wherefore we all arising from our places, we went to take the aire, not on horsebacke, because the time was spent, but on foote, amongst the pleasant garden. And after that euerie one with his friend, had vttered his opinion concerning *Fabricio* his discourse, we parted ech from other, some this way, others that way: In the end wee all of vs except two, who still walked in the garden, the sweetnesse whereof we all enioyed, met vnder the fresh gallerie. These staid not long before that against their willes, they gaue vs occasion of no small pastime: For on the one side of the garden, there was a woode so thicke with high greene trees, that scarcely you could haue planted one more there.

This thicket, where it ioyned to the garden, it was inuironed with a deepe ditch, which was drie without water: and on the other side closed in with the garden wall. Within there were nourished manie wild beasts,
and

and towards the garden, there was a little draw bridge to enter into it.

These two young men, drawing downe the bridge, went in and simply left the bridge downe as they came forth, immediatly for feare of those that entred the wood, there issued out two yong kids, and a hart. And if the garden gates had not shut of themselves, y^e beasts had been losse: which one of the seruants perceiuing, he sodainly called one of his fellowes, who brought a brase of dogges with him, which hee let slip at these wild beasts; we being moued with the crie of y^e dogs, and noyse of the hunters, wee looked out at the windows which were next the garden, where we might see this vvar already begun, vvhich vvas pursued vvith an infinit pleasure of vs all. For vve might see them runne vvith great svviftnesse, the beasts flying, and the dogs follovving, but y^e chiefest sport vvas, the many turnings in the garden, and the crooked alleies, by vvich the beasts did fetch many a skip, & turne to saue their liues, from the deadly pinching of the dogs. And after they had some 3. or 4. times rounded the garden, the hart, y^e bridge being yet cleane downn, & the gate open, vvith a light skip, got into the thicket again; the kids follovved, & the dogs after, which one of the seruants perceiuing, he drew vp the bridge, least they shuld come out again. But longing after the sport, vve came down, vvith each of vs a cudgel in our hand, you may gesse vvhat these beasts did (vvherof there vvas great store in the vvood) vvhen they savv y^e dogs follovv them. They ran euerie way, somtimesthorow y^e thickest places, somtimes right forth: & vvilest vve vv ere intentiue after this sport, we might espy 3. seruants cōming out of y^e vvood vvith the 2. kids, the hart, & 2. yong hares, vvich had been slain in this vvar. Wherefore imagining this pray to be sufficient after the ordinarie rate, after y^e commandement

A TREATISE

was giuen to take vp the dogges, who were not yet out of breath : we came forth of the woode, and shortly after sate downe to supper according to our woonted order, where wee supped verie pleasantly, the winde blowing verie freshly vpon vs : after supper wee fell in talke of this sodaine hunting, which fell out vnlooked for. Wherein wee continued, vntill the starres were seene in the skie, hauing before hand taken order that *Nennio* should the next day followe with his discourse at the same time that *Possidonio*, and *Fabricio* had done theirs, and then we entred into the house, where after we had walked a little, seeing it a fit houre to go to bed, the torches being lighted, vve were brought euerie one vnto his lodging.





The third Booke.



S often as waighing
with my selfe I consi-
der, howe great the
weakenes is which na-
ture yeeldeth vnto mā,
I cannot surely imagin
whence it shoulde pro-
ceed, that al men what
soeuer doe oftentimes
feele a certaine motion
of bloud, which sprea-
deth it selfe about the

heart, when as they do only call to minde but the verie
name of Nobilitie, which they possesse, and that much
more, when they are told thereof by some other. Nay
there are some, who without measure coueting that ti-
tle, doe pufte vp their mindes, esteeming that to be the
greatest fauour of all other. Other some there are (with-
out doubt of a more damnable opinion) who are moun-
ted vp to that height of pride, by the onely remembrance
likewise of that name, hauing no thought to the diffi-
cultie of the effect thereof, that they doe verilie
perswade themselves (such is the deceiueable be-
liefe of mortall men) that the whole worlde is at their
commandement, and surely they deeme themselves to
be equal to no other, then to God himselfe, and by this

S

con-

A TREATISE

conceite they being led away, they despise all vertue: Surely this doth draw me into great doubt: For as I say, if I enter into consideration of mans weakenes, and do waigh wherof he is made, I see nothing therein, but vile filthinesse. And nature did not onely giue this vnto man at his first creation, but likewise in the dissolution of this mortall life, it made the same farre worse. Seeing that the weake and fraile members of man, as it is euident of it self, so soone as the spirit is separated from the bodie, how soone they are changed into wormes, into earth, & loathsome smells: O miserable life of man, and of short continuance! But in truth this ought to be smally regarded (although it be a great argument of y^e frailty of man) if we did note not only in the beginning, & the end of the life of man, but euen in the midst therof, matters of greater woonder, because we see that all thinges vnder the heauens, doe make continuall warre ech one against them selues, and all together bid most cruell battaile against man alone. The aire oftentimes, is assailed with darcke cloudes, with flashing lightning, and threatening thunder, and all these are ordained to vex man. The water against the fire. The fire against the water, and both together do fight against man. Moist thinges against drie thinges, and drie thinges against moist, and both moist and drie warre against man. The South striueth with the North and the other windes, and all of them together blowing with great impetuositie, in the depth of the swelling seas, with great force do often deceiue y^e vain affections of man. What shal I say more? One man doth conspire against another. If then the life of man be after so strange a maner, wrapped in so many miseries, and in so many dangers; I cannot wel imagine what cause he hath to wax so proud, with this title of Nobilitie, which is giuen him. And as for my selfe, I know not els what I should say vnto you, but that
such

such men being on high lifted vp with a superfluous desire of glory, do let theſelues be carried away with their vaine appetites, like vnto a bird which flying in the aire hath no assurance. O foolish Nobilitie, if ſo we ought to call it, or rather deceitfull ſhadow. For we are not able to comprehend what aid this Nobilitie (no leſſe deſired then reuerenced of mortal men) may bring vs: for aſmuch as it neither bringeth wiſedome, nor knowledge, incomparable gifts, which are ſent vs from God, neither doth it make vs more iuſt, or more prudent, which are qualities that conſiſt in the ſoule. It may be that it is an aide vnto the body? No ſurely in my opinion, for it doth not giue neither greater beautie, nor greater ſtrength, nor greater grace thereunto: by all which reaſons we may eaſily gather into how great error theſe maner of men doe ſo fooliſhly fall. Yet will I not ſay, but that ſometimes Nobilitie, is cauſe of great good, as it is indeed, when it is true Nobilitie: but that which at this day beareth ſway in y^e moſt part of men, is not onely cauſe of any good, but contrarie of great euill. For if we would without imagination, paſſe thorow all the Cities that are in the world, we ſhuld find very few, or it may be none at al, where there are not factions, & diuiſions between gent. and the common ſort, from whence afterwards do bud hatred, quarrels, & ſo many murthers as we may heare of euery where. Amongſt many hiſtories, I might here recite to you, how y^e people of Rome, by reaſon of y^e diſcords which did ariſe between y^e Patriciens & them, often abandoned y^e city, & made their abode in y^e hil called *Mount Sacro*, vntil *Menenius Agrippa* made peace betwixt the. Experiēce hereof hath not bin only ſeen in forrain cities, of which I coulde bring you infinite examples, but euen in our owne, within theſe few yeares: I ſay then, that as one

A TREATISE

sort of Nobilitie is the cause of euill, so is the other of good. Howsoeuer it be, I do wholly referre my selfe to the iudgement of *Nennio*, who this day shal take vpon him the whol discourse: And it may be by good means he will agree (as it is commonly his custome) the disacording opinions of *Possidonio*, and *Fabricio*, which by the two former bookes, you may haue particularly vnderstoode. And so much the more it will delight vs to heare him, as their opinions doe seeme vnto vs to bee cleane contrarie, by meanes whereof likewise we shall heare the determining of the question propounded: wherfore inasmuch as I purpose not to intermingle my words with his, tempering my speech hereafter, I will indeuour without diminishing any word, orderly to set downe that which he discoursed, as much as the meanesse of my wit, will giue me leaue.

By this time there was no starre scene in the skie, because the sunne had alreadie chased the moist shadow of the night from of the earth; and with his shining brightnesse, euery part of our hemisphere was enlightened, and the birds merrily chirping from the top of the greene branches, gaue good witnesse, that the morning was come, when as both men, and women, being risen, after praiers was ended, mounted on horsebacke, and being entred into delightfull medowes, they softly paced on treading the greene graspe vnder their feet, vntil it seemed vnto them high time to draw back againe.

Wherfore they being returned, & shortly after set at table, they fed together with great mirth, and contentment, & dinner being don, som went to play at eschets, others at tables, & som to take their rest, as seemed best vnto the. But the middle of y day being come, they assembled theselues after their accustomed maner in y place
vwhere

whereas *Possidonio* & *Fabricio* had the 2. former daies, made their discourse. And by this time *Nennio* beeing readie, they sat down vvithout order round about him: vvho beholding the companie, and seeing them all attentive, vvithout any further staie, gaue beginning to his discourse in these wordes.

I did consider howv hard a thing it is, to laie a heavier burden on a mans backe then his forces are able to beare; in asmuch as it sildome happeneth but that the one of them doth thorovvveakenesse fall to y ground. And therefore I feared greatlie, that the like this daie should not happen to my selfe. Seeing that if I doe on the one side weigh the deapth of the question that is propounded; or the difficultie of those thinges that might thereupon be spoken: or on the other side the vveakenesse of my vnderstanding, the feeblenes of my memorie, together vvith my young yeares, certainlie not I onelie, but euerie one may in himselfe iudge the inequalitye of these things.

Vvhereupon it might easilie come to passe, that I my selfe, contrarie to my intent, and you, should remain vnsatisfied, & the matter vvherupon vve are to discourse, should not be sufficientlie opened vnto you. But sitting in the midst of so louing a companie, where there are men of better wit, and grauer iudgment then my selfe; and being moreouer constrained by you, by my iudgment to make peace betweene these tvvo champions, I dare not refuse so waighing a matter, though my forces be ouerweake, because I assure my selfe, that vvhere I shal shew my selfe feeble or wanting, that you wil take order to adde a supplie thereunto, and if so bee that I faile, you wil hold me excused, & impute it to my youg yeares. And if you heare any good thing come from me, I doubt not but you will giue mee fauourable hearing.

A TREATISE

ring. Wherefore my courage taking strength from this ground, I will not iudge it inequall vnto the burthen which I beare, and vnder his fauour who fauourably giueth succour vnto mortall men, I will by little and little begin my discourse.

Worthy company. The two opinions which were these two daies now past at large related, by *Fabricio*, and *Possidonio*, are manifest vnto you, which you haue wel vnderstood how different they are. For the one prooueth Nobility to consist in bloud, and in riches, and the other in the vertues of the mind. Hee denying bloud and riches, to be any thing necessarie: the other, that learning and knowledge needed not therein. In this wise they did inlarge their discourse, alledging and reprobuing many arguments, which both the one and the other side did make shewe vnto the hearers to bee probable: so that scarcely it may be discerned, which of them draweth nearer the troth. Yet to boult out the troth of this controuersie, before we passe any further, to shew what that true nobility is which we seeke for, which can very hardly be done, because it is of so many different kinds. One sort thereof is deriued from the glory of the bloud of our ancestors, accompanied with riches, of the which *Possidonio* spake sufficientlie the other day. An other sort proceedeth from the vertues of the mind, and of this *Fabricio* discoursed yesterdaie, with as great sharpnesse of wit as need to be. Of these two mingled together, and concurring in one subiect, is produced another sort, which I wil name compounded nobility. To these two may be added another kind which is called ciuill nobility. Before then y we come to determine our disputation, wee will first see the substance of euery one of these sorts of nobility, and I will begin with that which *Possidonio* defended.

Nobi-

Nobility of bloud (worthy Gentlemen) is no other thing but a certaine quality which is deriued from the bloud of our auncestors, and continued in their lavvfull posterity, and by how much it is more auncient, by so much is it accounted more worthy amongst the vulgar sort: and albeit there be diuers degrees of this nobility of bloud (the one of great men, in the number of which are those that are simple barons: the other of greater personages, as Earles, Marquesses, Dukes, & such like, a third in the highest degree of supremacy aboue the rest, as of kinges and Emperours) yet notwithstanding I vvill onely intreat of the moste inferiour degree; to vvit, of the nobility of those, vvho possesse neither Earledomes, nor Baronies, as it fell out in the disputation betvveene *Possidonio* and *Fabricio*, leauing al the other vnspoken of.

But like as a man can hardly staie his feete vppon a turning vvheele, so with as great difficultie may hee make any abode vpon this nobility, by reason that on what side soeuer I turne my selfe, I shall finde it more wauering and inconstant, then the leafe which vvithout any stay, is tost and blovvne heere and there with the wind.

For so diuers and of many fashions is the beleefe of men, touching the beginning and obseruance thereof, that we can scarcely discerne whether it bee Nobilitie, or rusticity.

Insomuch as that manner of life, vvich vve see is vsed by our gentlemen to conserue themselves in their nobility, and which the vulgar sort dooth repute to bee good, it may be in some other citie it wil not be accounted rusticity, the customes beeing different, and theirs Nobilitie: and the like estimation will wee holde of others.

We

A TREATISE

We see that in the famous and lordlie cittie of Naples, that marchandize is separated from the exercise of noblemen, they agreeing therin with the Thebanes, who in like maner did despise marchandize, and by publike decree did ordaine, that no marchant shoulde execute any publike office, within the city of *Thebes*, except he had left off the trade of marchandize the space of ten yeares: VVhich is cleane contrarie in the rich, and magnificent citie of *Venice*, where not onlie those of the baser sort, but noblemen likewise, and such as are of the number of their Senators, do vse marchandize, for the which they expose their liues to a thousande dangers, & wel-nigh coast the whole world. The worthinesse of the bloud of their predecessors, maketh a distinction betweene the noble and ignoble, and not their maner of vocation.

You may see how that kind of life, which is accustomed amongst the noble men of *Venice*, is reputed rusticitie and vile amongst the gentlemen of *Naples*, vvho hold their nobilitie as good, whereas the Magnificos of *Venice* doe esteeme theirs perfect, and the *Neapolitans* bad. What conformitie doe we finde between the gentlemen of *Rome*, and the *Florentines*: or betweene those of *Millan*, and the gentlemen of *Genoua*? Surelie such as the former. And how manifestlie the meanes to conserue the nobilitie of statelie France, doe differ from that of renowned and noble Italie, I thinke there are few vvhich doe not knowe it: Forsomuch as the gentlemen of France & of other countries, do liue vpon their lands, and hold it for rusticitie to dvvel in tovvnes, & contrarily in Italie, we leaue the countrie for clowns to inhabite, and gentlemen doe commonlie dwell in tovvnes. It is a woonderfull thing to consider that if a man do turne his thought into any part of the vvorlde vvhat-

whatsoever, he shal finde no countrey inhabited with men where this nobilitie of blood, and this difference betwene noblemen and those of the baser sort, is not: and yet notwithstanding scarce is there any nation, who both in the beginning and in the conseruation thereof, doe agree the one vvith the other. For some do deem him noble (and none other) who honoureth himselfe with the beames that doe shine from his ancestors, placing true nobility only in blood.

Some doe affirme that he is only noble, who is indued with great riches, albeit he haue no sparke of noble blood in him. Others say, it consisteth iointly in blood and riches. Others make themselves and their posterity noble, in following the war, applying the same with all their indeuour, albeit (in the opinion of some men) they doe descend but of base parentage. Besides, some doe hold for certaine, that this true nobility consisteth in those, vvho doe vvholly dispose themselves in the seruice of kings and princes, and of such as depend of them, as if the true glory of nobilitie did spring from thence.

This especially is obserued amongst noblemen, and shewed by great traine of seruants, by rich and statelie apparell, and by a certaine liberall kind of life in all their actions. Others doe deeme that he liueth most nobly and most Lordlike, who besides the properties aforefaide, hath great store of horses to serue him. There are yet others, who do affirme that to keepe houndes and Hawkes, and such sorts of beasts, and euery day to be a hunting, is an exercise and life aboue all other most fit for a Gentleman.

Others do deeme, that they maintaine their nobility well, in liuing idlie, and vsing nothing else but gaming. Some doe thinke, that they lead a very honorable life if

T

they

A TREATISE

they liue honestly and moderately. Some imagine that Nobility is to liue in the countrey, as I saide vnto you, some to dwell in a towne. Some thinke it to consist in marchandize; others are of a contrary opinion, that a noble man ought not to vse the trade of marchādize. But who can reckon vp the diuers sorts of nobility? seeing that not onely amongst diuers nations wee finde, hovv different this nobility of bloud is, as well in the beginning thereof, as in the vse thereof: but euen amongst those of the same countrey. For albeit that in France, and elsewhere, such is the custome, as I haue related vnto you: notwithstanding in *Gallia Belgica* in the prouince of *Lionois*, in *Gascoine*, and about *Narbonne*, and in other places in France; there are aboue three hundred sortes of life, for the conseruation of their nobility, not conformable the one with the other. We see likewise the very same in the people of Spain, because the inhabitants of *Arragon* doe not equallie obserue the same meanes to maintaine their nobilitie as those of the kingdome of *Grenado*, of *Castillia*, of *Catalonia*, of *Biscay*, of *Nauarre*, or of *Gallicia* do, much lesse they of the kingdome of *Portingall*.

What conformity is there betweene the Britons, the Normans, and the Fleminges? What agreement betweene either the high or lowe Germaine, and the inhabitants of Saxony? Surely none at all, because the nobilitie of one Nation is diuerslie distinguished from another. And if we will enter into discourse of the inhabitants of the higher and lower Hungarie, of England, of *Austria*, of *Banaria*, of *Valachia*, or of the great and lesser *Polonia*, of *Russia*, of *Muscovia*, of *Lithuania*, we shall not find amongst those Nations, no nor scarce particularly amongst themselves any certaine meanes from whence the Nobility of bloud dooeth spring,

spring: nor any certain maner of life, amongst the gentlemen which dooth agree together.

And not onely in the west and Northren partes, but likewise in the Easterly and Southerly, we see they doe vse such diuersitie of nobility. Forso much as those of that countrey we call Greece, doe esteeme the life of their Gentlemen, to be the true and proper life fitte for Gentlemen: whereas the Inhabitanes of the Greeke Ilands doe iudge it but bad.

VVhat resemblance of Nobility is there betweene the people of *Syria*, of *Capadocia*, of *Armenia*, of *Mesopotamia*, of *Media*, of *Persia*, of *Parthia*, and of a number of other prouinces? and returning to those vvho dwel in the partes of *Afrike*, we finde that they hold this nobility in great account, but the qualities and the meanes which they vse to conserue it, are different: because the people of *Mauritania* are not conformable amongst themselves: nor the people of *Getulia*, nor of *Libia Cirenenfis*, nor likewise they who dwell in *Aegypt*, or in both the prouinces of *Aethiopia*, or in the habitable countreyes of *Arabia*, or of *India*, amongst whom (albeit that in other respects they be a monstrous and cruell nation) yet haue they this diuersitie of nobility.

But vvhy doe I thus reckon vppe the habitable parts of the Worlde? For to conclude, you shall finde this diuersitie of the beginning and exercising of Nobilitie of blood so great, not as there are whole nations, but as there are people and Townes in the world.

And that I may not wander into places so farre off, vve may see the same in Italy, where there is no towne which I can name vnto you, which is conformable

A TREATISE

vnto another, in the first originall and vse of this nobility: if then the beginning and exercise thereof, bee not one and the same, but different in euery place, how is it possible for me to tell which is the best and most commendable sort thereof? Yet haue I the hart to conclude this necessarilie, that there is no certaintie in the beginning and vse of this kind of nobilitie, for if there were, it should carrie with it constantnesse and stabilitie, from the which it should take beginning, and by the which it should equallie conserue it selfe in euery country.

Scarce was *Nennio* come to the conclusion of his discourse, when as maister *Peter Anthonie*, turning towards him, said merilie vnto him after this maner.

Nennio, if thou bearest any respect vnto mee, staie there; for albeit that it hath been very pleasing vnto vs, to heare of so many fashions of nobilitie, and of so many diuers customs, as those of the countries which thou didst alleadge: yet notwithstanding this thy laste conclusion which thou diddest necessarily gather, doth not follow so easilie as I think. For although that at Rome, at Venice, at Naples and elsewhere, the customes bee changed (as thou sayst) and the maner of nobilitie, yet doth it not follow for all that, that there is no certaintie thereof.

For in Naples it is certaine, and this sort of nobilitie which is accustomed amongst the gentlemen, is most constantly maintained there; so likewise at Venice, at Rome, and in euery other place. And it is to no purpose to say that they are contrarie, for neither at Naples, nor elsewhere, shalt thou finde any contrarietie in the obseruance of their nobility. Likewise if so it were, it would follow that the one should be nobility, and the other rusticity: by which thou mayst certaintie iudge, that there is certaintie in this nobility. As for example,
we

we see that at Venice, the same lawes, or the same statutes, are not obserued, which are at Naples and at Rome; for they doe varie, as they may best fit and agree with the places: and yet doe they seeme cleane contrarie the one to the other: howbeit amongst the lawes and statutes of Venice there is no contrarietie, although they agree not, but are cleane different from those of Naples. Shall wee therefore say that they are not al lawes? yes surely that they are: Euen so may we say of all these kindes of Nobilitie, which albeit that either they doe seeme, or are indeed contrarie the one to the other, yet doe they not leaue the name of Nobilitie.

M. *Peter Anthonie* had no sooner ended his speech, but *Nennio* replied after this maner.

This certaintie of Nobilitie, which you would haue M. *Peter Anthonie*, if wee consider thereof in a separate place by it selfe, as it seemeth you doe, that is true which you say: Whereas I affirme, that in the whole world, there is no certaintie of Nobilitie, for the great diuersitie that is therein, by the which you may easily discern which is either more or lesse perfect, then the other: forasmuch as we finde not anie one sorte of nobilitie, aboue mentioned, which bringeth an approoued reason for the beginning therof, or that the life and exercise of noblemen be reasonably grounded vpon any certaine foundation: but I finde them to consist in obseruation without anie ground, whereof I can giue you no other reason, but that the vulgar sort haue after their owne will so appointed it, the like whereof doth not happen in lawes, which although they seeme or doe differ the one from the other, they doe all notwithstanding carrie a reason for their ground: so that this your similitude can hardly hold, this nobilitie be-

A TREATISE

ing without any certain principle, and without any determinate meanes.

M. *Peter Anthonie* made no other reply vnto his answere, as if he had been thorowly satisfied therewith: wherefore he preparing to follow on his discourse: M. *Dominico* breaking off his speech, said thus.

Albeit that in the defence of Nobilitie of bloud (worthie gentlemen) manie reasons haue been produced the other day, both by *Possidonio* and our selues, by the which we went about to proue, that it was true and perfect, to the which *Fabricio* afterwards to shew that his Nobilitie, and not that which *Possidonio* held for, was true and perfect, did with subtile reasons brauelie make answere thereto, and by his argumentes force himselfe to perswade vs, that such kinde of Nobilitie was not anie way to be held of any accompt. Yet notwithstanding, before wee passe anie further, and before you giue any iudgement thereof *Nennio*: I will not forbear in confirmation of the first opinion of *Possidonio*, with new reasons, which now come to my remembrance, to shewe you, that the Nobilitie of bloud, conioyned with riches, as a speciall gift comming from God, ought not onely to be had in estimation, but likewise to be reuerenced. And if it seemeth vnto thee *Fabricio*, that in alleadging new reasons, I should renewe the enterprise begun, letting the discourse of *Nennio*, let not that displease thee: for it is not meete that any of our reasons should cause the iudge to be silent, whose wisdom I am sure will thoroughly resolue thereof, though wee propose sundrie argumentes which shall happen into our remembrance, whether it be against thee, or in thy fauour.

It shall please me well that thou returne to discourse of the nobilitie of *Possidonio*: for if I be permitted to answer

swere aswell as thou to propound, I doubt not, but that I shal refute thy arguments as I haue done the rest, and that thereby the conceit of the iudge, shalbe more resolved, and the end of the discourse sooner brought to passe. Say on then that, which thy memorie will giue thee leaue. *M. Dominico* proceeded in this manner.

The great Prophet *Dauid*, hauing vpon his resounding harpe, with sweete accents song a diuine dittie to the praise of his mercie, who was his creator, he afterwards framed another, in the which by the prophet it is manifestly seene, that the Nobilitie of bloud in man is permitted of God, which with his owne seed is transfused vnto his lawfull heires, when as hee saith in these words: That powerfull and abundant shal his seede be on earth, and that honour, glorie, and riches, shalbe in his posteritie. You see how they honour the glorie of man, which is no other thing then that vvhich vve terme Nobilitie, continued in his posteritie. Thou seest likewise *Fabricio*, how that riches are ioyned together vvith Nobilitie: for the Prophet doth in such sort offer them ioyntrly together, that it seemeth that the glorie and Nobilitie of man shoulde be altogether imperfect, if it vvere depriued of riches. Whereunto notwithstanding thou vvouldest in no wise consent. And it woulde auaille thee nothing if thou vvouldest say, that y^e prophet vvas lifted vp into a heauenlie contemplation, he coulde not offer temporall, but spirituall and eternall riches, and so vvee ought to take this text alleaged spiritually.

For if wee vvoulde vnderstand it in this maner, it shoulde bee plaine agaynst his meaning, not so muche in regard, that he sayth expressely, he ought to be powerfull on earth, and mightie in the seed of
man,

A TREATISE

man, and not in heauen, as for that in the same song he afterwarde pursueth spirituall goodes, which man may obtain; so that necessarily we ought to vnderstand it of temporall goods.

Likewise it appeareth manifestly by the same scripture (which as you knowe ought in no wise to bee transgressed) that nobilitie doth descend from our auncestors. And likewise I remember to haue read in that booke (wherein the heavenly instructions of the life of man are diuinely handled) a text which sheweth plainly, that the glorie and nobilitie of the sonne, doth depend of the honour of the father, who if he be depriued thereof, the sonne likewise shalbe dishonoured. Thou seest how the nobilitie, and ignobilitie of man descendeth from his auncestors, as *Possidonio* affirmed.

And in another place the same authour charitably doth admonish vs, that we are to praise no man before his death, because he is knowne in his children, intending thereby, that the honor and glorie of man, remaineth with his posteritie after his departure out of this life. Truly *Fabricio*, these are authorities, which can hardly be auoided, besides the which I coulde yet alledge an infinite number like vnto these.

M. *Dominico* was no sooner come to the end of his speech, but *Fabricio* like vnto a braue warriour, who left nothing vntried, which might serue for resistance, and his owne defence, opposing himselfe against him, said thus.

These your authorities, M. *Dominico*, are not so hard to be withstood, as it seemeth at the first they are: for if we rest vpon the litterall sentence, I doe not denie but the prophet vnderstandeth that which you say, but I know that you are not ignorant, that it is necessarie for vs that are christians, to expound the holie scripture,
not

not according vnto the sound of the wordes, least wee easily incur the like blame which the obstinate Iewes (against their wils) fell into, but according to the spiritual sence. King Dauid then (intending by his comfortable song, to perswade man that he should be happy if he feared God in his commandements) what blessings did he offer him? Children, honour, and riches, perhaps, but not certainlie: for the rewarde of those vwho feare God, is to abound in earthly thinges.

But hovve many Priestes and Monkes are there vvhich are depriued of children, and of the honour of the world? How many are there, who in hermitages doe liue an austere kinde of life? How many begging Friers are there, wanting wealth? And how many are there, who haue vowed their chastitie to God for the beleefe they haue in him? Certainly the number is infinit. And notwithstanding, they haue byn iudged worthe of Gods fauour, and numbred amongst saints. So I doe iudge him to feare God more, who holdeth his virginity deare, and offereth the same vnto him with a free hart. Vwho flyeth from the honors and vanities of the worlde, and distributeth his goodes to the poore. The workes of mercy then, are the seed of the merciful man, and of him that feareth God, and not his children, which seed shal be mighty on earth as is promised. And he who for the feare of God, shal despise the honor and riches of the world, without doubt he shall obtain celestial glory with eternall riches:

In like sort ought we to vnderstand the last authority alleadged by you, which seemeth to intende, that man is knowvn in his children: for hardly shal we know him that departeth this world, without leauing any issue. We shal know him indeed in his children, that is to say, by his fruits, for if he hath sowne good fruite, in

A TREATISE

this mortall life, vve may certainly iudge, that he shall receiue better fruite in the life to come. To the other text I ansvvere: that the author in his booke, discour-
sing of precepts (no lesse full of Diuinitie then comfort) admonisheth vs (amongst other thinges) that vve take good heed, that we boalt not of our fathers shame, because our glory dependeth on the honor of our father. Intending thereby (according vnto reason) to teach vs, y^e vvho so mocketh his father, mocketh himselfe. And that is true in it selfe, but not that which the sound of his words shevveth vnto vs.

Maister *Dominico* did perceiue that *Fabricio* had nothing else to say in his defence, & did willingly receiue his answer, which he had made on the suddaine, which vvas so much the more pleasing vnto the company, as forsaking the exposition of the letter, he drew neere to the sence of the troth. But *Nennio* (as one to vvhome the troth of their propositions and answeres vvas vvell knowne) was not pleased that any of them should intermeddle in answering and replying. Wherefore passing on further, he entered in this maner to his discourse againe.

Howsoever it be *Fabricio*, this nobilitie of bloud, by the vulgar sort is helde in the highest estimation aboue any other: forsomuch as they doe repute those to bee true Noblemen, who are descended of a noble familie, so that if any mention be made amongst them of Nobilitie, they vnderstand not nobilitie of mind, but nobilitie of bloud. Which maketh great in fauour of *Possidonio*, for this vvord Noble, beeing simplie spoken by the courteous Lady, seeing that we are in doubt thereof, we ought to take it as it is receiued by the common voice.

But that I may no longer intertaine you heere with
Possidonio,

Possidonio, we will passe on with *Fabricio*, to the other sort of nobility, for the which hee hath plaide the stout warricour.

That is not like vnto the former esteemed of any worth, by the vulgar sort, but by men of learning, and such as are well brought vppe, it is highlie accounted of, and greatly reuerenced, and it consisteth in the vertues of the mind.

For nobility of the minde, is no other thinge, but a shining brightnesse which proceedeth from vertue, which maketh them famous and noble that are possessed therewith, of the excellencie and perfection whereof howe amplie *Fabricio* didde discourse, is wel knowne vnto you: for in discoursing thereof yesterday, with such argumentes as came into his mind, he intertained vs vntill the euening. And surely I finde it neither so diuers, nor so changeable, nor so vnconstant as the other, but it is alwaies, and euery where, after one fashion, certaine and stable. It onely taketh beginning from vertue, and with good and vertuous actions is conserued. Whereupon some doe call it perfect nobilitie, because it standeth in neede neither of bloud, nor of the riches of other men.

How may that be (quoth one of the Ladies of the company) who with a witty readinesse opposed her selfe against him) that it needeth not riches, seeing that they are not onely necessary vnto the nobility of bloud, but to this likewise, whereof you speake, as it seemeth vnto me.

For as *Possidonio* did the other day relate vnto vs, no man can attaine vnto any degree of vertue or nobilitie, except riches doe make a breach and vvaie vnto him.

A TREATISE

And who knoweth not, that if any wise or learned man, for want of wealth went ill apparailed, that hee should not be accounted as a noble man? You may see then how riches are necessary vnto the Nobility of the mind.

The young Lady hauing ended hir speech, *Nennio* made this answer vnto her.

Put case Madam that it were true, that a man cannot attaine vnto vertue or nobility, without riches, notwithstanding I speake not of the meanes to become noble: for according as you consider them, riches are nothing else, but the meanes by the which the will of man is put in execution: but it is of nobility it selfe, that I talk. For after that man hath innobled his mind with vertue, and driuen from thence all vice, what neede hath hee of riches? What hurt receiueth he if he couer not his body, if it be not set forth with gorgeous apparell? it may be Madam, that a meane, honest, and modest attyre, doth not onely amongst the better sort of men, but euen amongst the common people, giue no lesse grace to one that is become noble, in this maner, then an imbrodered, lasciuious, and laced garment, doth set forth your noble man of the other sort.

So that if we will effectually comprehend the true essence of man, and with a right eie consider his qualities, he should cast off all his habilitie, deprive himselfe of honour, forsake the goodes of fortune, lay aside his costly apparell, and so we ought to beholde naked, not his body, but his mind, of what calling soeuer he be of, as Diogenes and others did, of whome *Fabricio* didde speake yesterday. Thus shall we know whether hee bee noble, or ignoble; good or euill, if in regard of his Nobilitie, he hath need of that which is his own, or of that which other men possesse: when we see him not vainlie
set

set forth with faire apparell, and rich pompe, wee shal deeme him noble : for if a stocke, in forme of a man, were clad with them, should wee iudge it noble? who-soeuer would thinke so, had no iudgement of a man. Which wise *Themistocles* did plainly teach vs Madam, who being asked to whom he would giue his daughter to wife, whether to a man adorned with vertue, but poore; or to a rich man destitute of vertue: he said, I had rather a man wanting wealth, then riches that had neede of a man. I say then, that riches are to no vse vnto him, whose minde is indued with nobilitie, so that he be not wholly depriued of them; for hee shoulde rather want meate, then apparell. But returning to our purpose, I doe consider, that he in whose reuerence all liuing creatures doe humbly bowe themselves, hauing created the earth, only in giuing it being, he bountifully beautified it with diuers plants (as wee may see euery where) vnto the which (besides their being) he gaue nothing els but life.

Afterwards he created those liuing creatures, which we call brute, or vnreasonable, the which doe farre and neere walke in the sea, in the earth, and in the aire, and to them he gaue life and sence.

Finally, God framed man vnto his likenesse, to whom he graunted not onely being, life, and sence; but he added reason therunto, which is a peculiar gift vnto man. Man being then partaker of all these qualities, in which of them shall we place true Nobilitie? certainly not in being, nor in life (for that should be common with the earth and with the plantes.) Much lesse in sence (for then should we make brute beastes noble.) Wherefore we will then necessarily say, that true and perfect nobilitie of man, consisteth only in that part, which maketh man different from beastes; and that is reason, by the

A TREATISE

which he is called a reasonable creature, and the other vnreasonable, as I said vnto you. He then who leadeth this mortall life swaruing from reason, is not to be accounted nor called Noble, albeit that he descende of noble bloud: For albeit he hath the outward shape of a man, being depriued of the most Noble part, which God hath giuen vnto man (I meane reason) he remaineth without doubt to be reckoned amongst vnreasonable creatures, and to be compared vnto beasts: which being not partakers of reason, doe leade their life according as their sence reacheth them. And who knoweth not this, that man casting away so noble a gift, can neuer attaine vnto the soueraigne Nobility of his last end? Hee then that submitteth the operations of his minde vnto reason, and knoweth well howe to distinguish it from sensualitie, is a right and perfit gentleman.

M. Peter *Anthony* taking the speech vpon him, said thus: Seeing that it is lawful for vs with new reasons to fortifie either side of the defendants, I will not forbear to let you heare, that which I haue called to mind, in fauor of *Fabricio*, which being said, he proceeded in this manner.

Hereby worthy gentlemen, is shewed the excellency of the nobilitie of the mind, that one thing is more noble and excellent then another, by how much the subiect thereof is excellent and Noble: Nowe the subiect of this Nobilitie, is farre more noble and worthie then the nobilitie of bloud, because it proceedeth of vertues: therefore the nobilitie of the minde is much more excellent and noble then the nobilitie of bloud.

And not onely in consideration of the subiect, it is more perfect then the other, but likewise in the regard of the obiect, because it is alwaies seene to remaine in a more worthie and vertuous obiect; that is to say, in a
man

man well borne, prudent and wise. Whereas the other may be in a most vile object. Forasmuch as if of noble blood, a foolish, or mad child be ingendred : notwithstanding amongst the vulgar sort, he is accompted one amongst noble men. How manie are there sprong of a worthie familie, who become robbers in the high way, murtherers, theeues, slaundersers, and finally enemies to themselves? Ought we to accompt such noblemen, because they descend of noble parents? God forbid, for considering the vilenesse of their mind, they ought to be iudged not only ignoble, but more base and abject, then any other vnreasonable creature, although that the common sort being deceiued, doe hold them in the rancke of noblemen. What nobilitie shall wee accompt that woman to be of, who drawing her nobilitie from a worthy stocke, doth repute her selfe noble, and notwithstanding making small accompt of her honor, doth villanously giue her bodie and life in pray, to delight those to whom shee ought not to haue yeelded?

What Nobilitie is there in those children, who in their swadling cloutes descended of a noble stocke, are no sooner come into the world, but they are esteemed of noble blood, and yet are neither capable of vertue nor reason? surely none at all. You may then perceiue, in considering both the subiect, and the object of the nobilitie of the minde, howe great likewise the excellencie, and the perfection thereof is. And to proceede further vpon this matter: I finde that euen Fortune sometimes hath her part in this Nobilitie of blood, conioyned with riches: for if my selfe and you were borne of a Noble familie, and those of base parentes, or that wee be by birth riche, and they poore, vwhat glorie, vwhat Nobilitie, vwhat praise,

A TREATISE

praise, ought we to attribute to our selues? and vvhhat profite, or what fault, (or rather what defect) are vve to impute vnto them? Truly none at all; seeing that they haue committed no offence, and we are not aduanced thorow our riches. The glorie then, and the fault ought to bee attributed vnto fortune, whoe gouerneth worldly matters, as it pleaseth her, and not vnto vs: whereas the Nobilitie of the mind, is not in subiection, nor flauerie; but free, and out of all humaine perill: and he vvhich by his ovvn vertues, becommeth noble, shall haue the honour, and the glorie thereof, and not fortune, nor his auncestors, nor any other who-
focuer.

Here *M. Peter Anthony* broke off his speech without saying anie more. Wherefore *Nennio* taking the discourse vpon him, said thus.

Certainly to fortifie this side, concerning the nobilitie of the minde, no lesse delightfull, then true reasons do stil offer themselues; as amongst others, that which *Incuv* remember: forasmuch as I esteeme that hee ought to be adiudged perfit, vvho hath no need of any other: novv the nobilitie of the minde is of that sort, therefore it is perfit. The like vvhereof cannot be saide of the Nobilitie of bloud: for if it vvere perfit, it should haue no need of riches, vvwhich (according to thy saying the other day *Possidonio*) are not onely an ornament, but a part of Nobilitie. Which is more then true: for nowe adaies, a man can hardly conuerse amongst gentlemen and great Lords, but that he shalbe mocked of euerie one, if hee be not rich, and hath not vvherevvithall to spend of his ovvne, or at the least if he be not vvell clad in apparell: vvwhich thinges are in this our age not smally set by. It follovveth then, that bloud is not sufficient of it selfe alone, to make a perfect
nobleman.

nobleman. And we cannot with reason name that perfect nobilitie, which proceedeth from thence, as being subiect to that which is verie incōstant. Wherefore we will say, that if the noble man by birth wanteth riches, he shall likewise want nobilitie: which conclusion *Possidonio* thou diddest affirme in thy discourse to be true. And in truth it is come to passe at this day, when as the noble born doth excercise some craft, or handiwork, that is vile and derogating from nobilitie: But how poore soeuer a man is, that is born of noble blood, I would not iudge that he should become ignoble, thorough pouertie, albeit that he had not the same renowne, and reputation, with men of this age, as he that is both noble and rich. Herehence it commeth, that manie descending of a high lineage, giuing themselves to some vile exercise, haue darckned, and wholly lost their nobilitie, so that they are no more esteemed of the blood of Noble men, but reckoned amongst the cōmon sort. Herehence it proceedeth likewise, that amongst manie being of one familie, some are reputed noble, and others ignoble. You may see then, howe corporall and base exercise, doth bring contempt vnto the nobility of blood, and conuert it into his contrarie. We must then conclude, that vertue only is necessarie therein. For a noble man by blood, who is deprived of vertue, is made no otherwise, then as a sepulchre of white marble, enriched with fine gold, which at the first shewe is pleasant to the sight of those, that behold it: but considering afterwards the rotten body, and filthy stinch, that is within it, it seemeth vnto them hideous and horrible. Such a one is hee who is descended of noble blood, for at the first sight he seemeth gracious, & pleasing, but looking afterwards to the foule corruption of his maners, and to the default of the gifts of his mind, by which he should

X

become

A TREATISE

become worthie, neither this grace, nor the pleasure which was found therein, is anie more scene, but in steede thereof basenesse, and deepe contempt. Whereof hee may be called noble in apparance by the which the common people (whose eyes are blinded, that they cannot see the trueth) doe lightly iudge, and holde him as a noble man, which is farre different from him, whose minde is fraught with vertues, because that hee holdeth not an apparance of true Nobilitie, but the verie essence thereof.

Nennio made no staie, but still followed on his discourse, when as the Ladie *Camilla* who was desirous to heare an end of their controuersie (which it maie be shee gathered by the last wordes vttered by *Nennio*) turning towards him, with a prettie grace, according to her woont, and yet with somewhat a hastie spirite, shee saide these wordes vnto him.

Thou concludest alreadie *Nennio*, that *Possidonio* is he that shall loose the wager, seeing that his nobilitie is apparant, and not true.

You are verie hastie Madame (quoth *Nennio*) to desire to heare the sentence before time require, and before the rest of the companie: for in that discourse which now we doe make to approoue, or disallow of the two sortes of Nobilitie, both the one and the other opinion is fortified, as you may haue vnderstoode, with more pregnant reasons, so much there wanteth that I intend not as yet so soone to descend to the determining of the question, seeing that wee haue so great time leste vs. Let it not then displease you to staie a little, and to hearken vnto mee.

Both to staie and to heare you likewise, shall please
me

me well, answered the young Ladie : but yet it seemed vnto me that you intended as much as I saide vnto you.

Nennio replied: Madame, I pray you haue patience a little, and be attentive vnto my speeche, vntill I haue ended it : for I doubt not, but you shall with the rest be satisfied with my iudgement. The yong ladie being appeased, *Nennio* taking the discourse vpon him, began to speake in this wise.

Nobilitie of blood indeed is apparant, but hee which is deprived of vertue, is hardly esteemed to shine amongst men, vvith the glorie of his blood onely, vvwhich commonly bringeth forth ignorance, wherevpon followeth after vvvarde contemptible pride. For so soone as the light of mans vnderstanding is occupied vvith ignoraunce, vvhereby it is let, that it cannot enter into the trueth of thinges, man cannot consider, that anie is more wise, or more learned then himselte, but becommeth proude, in suche sorte that thorough ignorance, hee is made bold, insolent, and rashe, easily contemning all maner of vertue, of science, and of manners, groping in the darke, like vnto a blinde man.

Of which companie it seemeth, that the worlde at this daie, is but too plentifull, seeing that euerie where yee shall finde those who foolishlie deeme themselves to bee mounted to the highest degree of Nobilitie, whereas indeede, they are at the lowest step therof, in that they haue no care to innoble themselves any further, but wretchedly despise all those, who doe learne any science, and do followe vertue, and they disdain men of noble conditions, and consequently those who are more worthy then themselves. Of these I intēd to speak, who waxing proud of their blood, haue

A TREATISE

the eyes of their vnderstanding blinded with a grosse and thicke vaile of ignorance, vvho vvoulde iudge the Lord God, if hee were to descend vpon earth againe.

O foolishhe sect of mortall men ! I cannot truely imagine to what end they leade so miserable a life ; not tasting of the sweetnesse of vertue, from whence springeth all Nobilitie. Were it not farre better for man that might taste thereof, and wil not, that hee were deprived of life ? yes surely. If then they liue without any reason, what difference shall we make betweene them, who esteeme themselues chiefe amongst other noble men, and the baser sorte of men, nay rather betweene them and beastes ? I can hardly finde it. For all doe equally followe the seruice of the fraile fleshe, setting aside eternall thinges.

Ought these men to waxe proud in this sorte, who conuersing with wise courtiers, or with other men deserving estimation, where they discourse of knowledge, of historie, or of anie other vvorthie vertue, doe become worse then beastes, and sometimes doe resemble images of Marble ?

As it happened the other day, that being in companie with certaine Lordes (with some of you that are here present) where there were men of great learning, and skill : and amongst them some of those who bragge so greatly of their Nobilitie, wee discoursed a great while both of hautie, and meane matters : and intending to passe the middle of the day, in iestes and disportes, we set abroche certaine tales, vvhich seemed so much the more pleasing vnto vs, as they were farre from the trueth : but these noble men did maruellously wonder at them : As the tale of the ape of India, y^e plaid so well at chesse, & this other, that in the
midst

midst of the riuer Tabor mens words do freeze, & afterwards thawe when they come to the fire. Euery one that had any quicke capacitie, inuented some fable or other, but these noble Lordes (who feared to set their foot on ground, and to put off their hatte for marring their haire) being present there in company (as I tolde you) were in the like taking, (vnderstanding of such great wonders) as the people when they heard the holie frier preach, vnto them, the fasting, virginity, simplicitie and holinesse, of the blessed soule of sir *Chapellet*: and two of them harkened to our tales with like attention, as *Callandrine* did, when he vnderstoode the discourse of the wonderfull vertues of *Elitropia*: I was verie desirous at that time, to adde vnto the former stories, the miracle which happened to *Callandrine* himselfe, when he was gotten with child by his wife, which made them all to stand amazed.

Many other pleasant tales we told, which being ended, some one of the company said, yea it is true, I remember it well, and it was about that age of the world, when as Oxen did speak, which he had no sooner said, but one of these great Noblemen did aske him, saying: Then oxen spake in times past. Whereunto the other being a young man of a sharpe witte saide, yes sir; but might wee vnderstande their speech, quoth the noble man? yes my good lord, quoth he, and they oftentimes sung in company with men, and that with so sweet melodie, that their musicke seemed to surpasse the harmony of the religious Nunnes of *Agnus Dei* of *Padoua*. I cannot wel tel you how great the laughter was, which vvas continued so much the more, that in laughing he vvas so amazed, that for a long time he held his mouth awry, vvondring greatly at those things hee had heard. Truly the ignorance of them is so great and grosse,

A TREATISE

that it depriueth them of their vnderstanding, that it maketh them like vnto brute beasts: as by an example which happened the other day, I will better giue you to vnderstand. For comming to church with certaine of my friends to heare masse, one of these worthy lords (whose name for some respect I will not vtter) sate next vnto me, euen at the very instant when they lifted vppe that which they cal the body of Christ, and he hearing that I saide *Adoramus te Christe*, he demanded of me what these words *adoramus te Christo* signified: but I vnderstanding his demand answered him fitlie to the purpose: afterwarde hee asked mee what the sacrament which the priest lifted vp with his two handes, and the chalice did signifie, and what was the cause that when he lifteth it vppe, wee vse to beate our breaste and our mouth with our hand: many such foolish questions he asked me, more fitter for Paganes and Saracins, then for Christians. In regarde of the which, if before I accounted him for halfe a man, I now held him no better then a beast. And if you aske me if hee were a child, I answere, that though his demaundes were childish: yet did he exceed all of vs in age.

Doe you beleue that he is (I say not onely a Gentleman but that which is more) a Christian, although that his head was washed with the holy water of Baptisme? Doe you repute him a Gentleman, because he is descended of Gentlemen? God forbidde that hee shoulde so much as be accounted a man.

Neither will I yet keepe secret from you, that which happened of late (although in Honour I shoulde not declare it vnto you) for one of these Noblemen intending to cause a gowne of Satten to bee made for his Wife, hee brought the Taylor into the house where the stuffe lay readie vpon the table; and as the Tailour was

was aboute to chawke out the compasse of it, the Gentlemanne (whose name I will not discouer or make knowne) causing his Wife to stande vppe, saide vnto the Taylour : Sirrha, where wilt thou beginne to take measure of her, before, or behinde : the Tailour whoe was more discreete then the Nobleman, perceiuing his foolish demaund, saide vnto him ; my Lorde, I must beginne to take measure on the sides : the Lady was ashamed thereat, and holding downe hir head, blushed to see his folly.

Now doe you thinke that such men are to be called Noble, although that they descend of a noble stocke, and that their apparell is thicke laide on with lace ? I shoulde rather iudge them depriued of nobilitie : you may see into what manifest ignorance nobility of bloud causeth a man to fall, whereof afterwarde pride is ingendred.

Here *Nennio* paused a while, and afterwards proceeded further in this sort.

Yea? this nobility of bloud is not onlie cause of pride, and ignorance, but of vn sufferable euill, and ineuitable losse. How often hath there been cruel warre betweene the people of Rome ? How many Nations hath beene raised in armes ? How much bloud hath beene shedde through the continuall dissentions which grewe betweene the noble men and the common people ? Surely verie much, for the pride of noble men against the comminaltie, was growne to that height, & the desire which they had to increase their wealth, by the occupation of that which belonged vnto other menne was so great, that the common people oftentimes did remain in more safety in waging war abroad, then they did in peace with the nobility at home, who hand'ed them as their capital enemies, by which actiōs they had not only brought

A TREATISE

brought the common people of Rome to extreame poverty, but all Italie: whereof did followe ciuill vvarre, and that because they did vsurpe both the goodes and landes of the cōminaltie: vwhereof did spring the lawe *Agraria*, which did forbid, that no man, vwhether he vvere noble, or of the common sort, should hold more land then a paire of oxen could plowe in five hundred daies: and that the enemies lands should be deuided amongst the people. VWhich lawe did so displease the nobility, that they conducted their armies euen to the extreame limits of Italie; and *Tiberius Gracchus* (succeeding as Tribune of the people) to fauour that lawe, the Romane liberty vvas cleane ouerthrowne. For thereof did arise such great hatred, that they came to armes, and to bloud, without measure: wherupon the people reposed themselves vpon *Marius*, and the nobility vpon *Scilla*; vwho after most cruell vvarre remained conquerour.

And the same disdaines, and inuward enmity, renewing betweene the Nobility and the communaltie, in the time of *Cesar* and *Pompey*, the one making himself the leader of *Marius* his side, the other taking part vwith *Scilla* as their cheefe conductor: vwhereof did followe infinite and cruell slaughters, *Cesar* in the ende beeing victorious, vwho was the first tyrant of Rome.

What shall I say of the bloudie butcherie, which following after the suddaine death of *Asellius* (Pretor of Rome) who vvas set in that authoritie to reforme the insatiable vsuries which were so increased in the citie, by the rich and mighty, that the people entred into despaire, and vwith great furie did breake dovvne the Images of *Scilla*, and of *Pompey*, which vvere so hatefull vnto them? Greeuous likewise vvere the dissentions, vvhich did spring in the famous Citie of Athens, betweene

tweene the noblemen and the people, during y^e vvhich *Cassandra* was established by the nobilitie, chiefe of the faction against the comminalty, *Polipercon* being their leader: who not without great slaughter did driue *Cassandra* into Macedonia, so that the people as conquerors remained at libertie. Whereuppon they did condemne the principall persons of the contrary faction to death, and did banish others the citie, amongst whō, *Demetrius Phalerius* was one, and *Phocion* that great captaine of theirs: whose (albeit that his vertues were iudged worthy of al humane glory and praise) yet came he to be so hatefull vnto the common people, that euen vntill his death they denied him buriall.

How greuous the hatred is which groweth by wicked oppressions, made by the nobility against the comminalty, they onely doe know who haue made tryall thereof. That which happened vnto *Fabius*, beeing Consul, may make good prooffe hereof, for he extreamly oppressing the people, hadde in such sort inflamed their greuous hatred against him, the Romane armie buckling with their enemies, and holding the victorie for certaine and vndoubted, the souldiors rather resolved to depriue themselves of the victorie, then to giue him cause of triumph. Farre worse then this happened to *Appius Claudius*, (a capitall enimie of the people) for he holding the Consulship in the warre against the *Volsques*; the souldiors rather gaue him triumph of dishonour then of victory, turning their backs to their enemy. And heere I will declare vnto you the ende of this *Appius Claudius*, who was woont to call a most vile prison which was in Rome, the habitation of the Romaine people, but the name was not agreeable to the effect, for by the appointment of the Tribune of the people, he was shut vp in that prison amongst theeues,

A TREATISE

and murderers, and there put to death. But why doe I speake onely of *Appius Claudius*, seeing that it hath alwaies remained as a naturall and hereditary instinct to that familie, with mortall hatred to pursue the commons, so that the chiefeſt of that house, vvere in continuall diffention with the officers that vvere for the people.

By this you see, that the Nobilitie of bloud, is not onely cause of pride and ignorance, but of most cruell slaughters and mortall hatred.

Nennio gathered this last conclusion of his speech, and afterward he followed on in this maner.

The nobilitie of bloud (most worthy gentlemen) besides the calamities afore spoken of, dooth ingender a kind of enuy, that stil gnaweth in the heartes of noble men: for they seeing some amongst the common sort, deseruedly aduanced to honour and dignity, through their singular value & vertue, immediatly there ariseth in their hart intollerable enuy, which doth eat and consume them, as the sunne doth the snow. Of such vigor was the enuie which increased in the hearts of the Roman nobility, when as they saw *Gn. Flavius*, whose father was a Libertine, created Pretor of the people, in regard vwhereof, they laid awaie their golden rings, and their trappings of their horses, which vvere markes of nobility, which they vvere vvont to do, when they were sad and sorrowfull. And on a time the same *Gn. Flavius* being Pretor, going to visit his colleague who was sick, he met there many gentlemen of Rome, amongst the vvchich one of them (in regard he vv as born of base parentage) moued not himselfe to do him honour as Pretor, and their superiour, vwhereof he made no account, but commanded that the chaire vvherein the greatest and most vvorthy officers of Rome vvere caried throgh the

the city, should bee brought vnto him, and afterwardes caused it to be placed before the gate of the pallace, to the end that none of the gentlemen should issue forth, but they should euen in despite see him set in that chair, into the which none of them did euer ascend. Enuy likewise did cruelly afflict the hearts of the Romane nobilitie, vwhen as they saw *Ventidius Bassus*, of whom *Fabrizio* did speak yesterday, of a base hackney man, to be mounted to the dignity of a Tribune, to the degree of Pretor, to be created *Summus Pontifex*, and finallie to be made Consull, in such sort y they made verses vpon the basenesse of his birth.

But doe I say onely that the noble men are enuious ouer the common people, when as it doth with great vehemency finde place euen amongst themselues? Enuy was the cause of the horrible vvars vvhich did grovv between *Cornel. Scilla*, *Marius*, and *Cinna*, which were most noble men: betweene *Cesar* and *Pompey*, vvhovwere Patriciens of Rome (of vvhom I did make mention of late) and of many more worthy Roman Consuls, of whō the auncient histories are repleat.

Enuy, which did proceed from the nobles, did bring *Pompey* after his Empires and triumphes, to remaine in his house, or in his Grange, he seldome daring to shew himselfe publicly abroad. *Q. Metellus* shewed the hatred which he did beare vnto *Q. Pompeius*, when as he saw that after he had brought both of the countries of Spain into subiection, *Pompey* succeeded him, which was most odious vnto him. For he licensed the greater part of the souldiors to depart, caused the victuals to be spoiled, the weapons of the armie to be broken, did forbid that any man should giue the Elephants meate: and to conclude, left not any thing wherewith *Pompey* might defend himselfe against the enemies.

A TREATISE

So great was the enuy vvhich possessed the mind of *Cato* of *Vtica*, because that *Cesar* had in *Egypt* defeated the partakers of *Pompey*, who were fled into *Afrike* after his death, that he flue himselfe in *Vtica*. Enuy likewise moued *Themistocles* that valiant captaine, to persecute that worthy and iust *Aristides*, both of them being noble men of *Athens*. But why do I so inlarge my discourse, to recount to you so many ancient histories.

Turne your eies (if you so please) vpon euery town, and euery place of the vworld, inhabited by noble men, and those of the common sort; and you shall finde no place exempt, where there is not rooted amongst noble men one with another, amongst the nobilitie & the comminalltie, hatred, persecution, enuy, ambition, ignorance, and pride. These are the fruites which nobilitie of blood doe giue to the mind, which likewise doth not bring any other grace to the body, because it neither maketh them more fair nor more liuely, nor more strong, nor more witty, nor more aduised, nor more apt then other men who are borne of base blood: forso-much as therein nature worketh equally, and not the nobility of blood.

Certainlie (quoth Maister *Iohn Francisco*) it seemeth that it bringeth forth in all places, not onely vnfauorie fruit, but most venemous and noisome.

A bad root (answered M. *Dominico*) cannot produce good fruit: now nobility of blood being brought into the world of a malicious root, what goodnesse can it yeeld? Surely none at all.

M. *Io. Francisco* said, what is that root so dangerous and venemous, whence nobility of blood proceedeth?

I would tell you (quoth he) but that I should displease *Nennio*, in interrupting him.

It shal not displease me, answered *Nennio*, to hear you, so that you doe promise mee, to tell vs from whence

the roote of this Nobilitie of bloud doth proceed, vpon which condition it shall please me well to haue your opinion, so that you may boldly go forwardes: that being said, *M. Dominico* turning himselfe towards *M. Iohn Francisco*, began to speake in this maner.

It is an euident matter, that the great Architect of the world, created man, pure, simple, not spotted with vice, and perfectly good, but it is not to bee beleueed that he made him either noble or ignoble: Man then himselfe was the inuenter and beginner of this Nobilitie. Hee being cause thereof, Nobilitie beganne in the first age, to be noted in those (and they were esteemed Noble) who either by force or fraude, did surmount others.

Cain the first man who was borne in the world, did ouercome his brother *Abel* and slew him, and he was the first who by deceit and crueltie did vsurpe the name of Nobilitie, in that thorough furious audacitie, hee brought other men into subiection, whereupon hee was equally honoured and reuerenced by them, and reputed honourable, more then any other. After him did succede *Enoch* *Irada*, and others, who descending from *Cain* (that proud murtherer and vsurper of other mens goods, & so consequently noble) they were likewise esteemed noble. But *Seth* the third brother of *Cain* (a iust and good man, and y first in the world who called on the name of God) he was not so much esteemed, and reputed amongst men, but was adiudged of a soft nature, abiect and vile, with all his posteritie: and by this meanes, nobilitie tooke beginning.

By succession of time, it pleased the great gouernor of heauen, and of earth, for the wickednesse which were generally committed on the earth, corrupted by man, who made no accompt of God, to destroy the
Y 3 world,

A TREATISE

world, by the opening of waters, of fountaines, of the depth, yea of the water gates of heaven : which hee would not first close vp, or stoppe, before that euerie liuing soule was destroyed except *Noe*, who was so highly in his fauor, with the familie of those that did descend of *Seth* the ignoble. Of this *Noe* afterwarde, amongst others, did *Cham* descend, who shewed himselfe vnreuerent, and wicked towards his father; *Nemrod* did succeed, of his Line a man verie mightie, and puissant, and full of wickednesse. He gaue the first beginning to the accursed vice of Tyrannous dominion, and by Tyrannie he ruled the kingdome of Babylon, of Arad, & others: Whereupon thorow his might and tyrannie, being become king, hee was adiudged most noble. Nowe great men grewe to such temeritie, that they constrained those, who at that time were rude and grosse, not onely to repute them as noble, but to adore them as Gods.

Hereupon their heires and successors were in a manner esteemed as Demy-Gods. And so the opinions of the first men (who to make a nobleman, did ground themselves vpon murther and crueltie, and in tyrannising ouer the people) did as it were from hand to hand, in such sorte extend their dominion, that we may truly conclude, that Nobilitie of bloud proceedeth euen from the first age of the worlde, from this generall roote.

The generations of men being increased in the world, and kingdomes possessed, it was the pleasure of kings and princes, that they who did most of al content them and fitted their humours best, should be seperated from the common people, in giuing them especiall priuiledges, graces, and preheminences, which were not graunted to the vulgar sorte : Wherefore, they and
their

their successors were held by the first people of the worlde, as men well pleasing God, and because they were seuered from the multitude, and reuerenced more then others, they were called Notable, which is as much as Noble. And for this cause the men of y world, being extreameley desirous of honor, and of glorie; and seeing that such was the meanes to become noble, manie (to the ende they might obtaine this glorie of nobilitie) did seeke to become pleasing vnto kinges, and Princes. Some in shewing themselves cruell murderers of their enemies, others in boldly ransacking the people, others to gratifie their prince, did giue them either their wife or their daughter in pray: some to delight him, did feede him with dishonest pleasures, others with flatterie, with treason, with money, & with other horrible wickednesse, and wretched deuises, to winne his fauour, by the which they did afterwarde obtaine priuiledges of Nobilitie for themselves, and their posteritie. This is the birth M. *Iohn Francisco*, this is the beginning, from whence the Nobilitie of bloud did first spring, this is the pathe, this is the meanes, by the which they did so easily mount vp to the soueraign degree of Nobilitie. From hence it grew, from hence noble men had their creation. And if we would enter into consideration of the behauour, the customes, the maner of life of Noblemen of this age, surely wee shoulde finde them wrapped in vanities, in robberies, in cruelties, in treasons, in wantonnesse, in gaming, and manie other mischiefes; so hard a thing it is for them to shake off this their first nature. And so strong was the opinion of men, to place nobility in cruelty, in robbery, in wrong, that not onely they did repute those noble, who were most fierce, and most faithlesse, but euen amongst vnreasonable creatures, the/

A TREATISE

they did holde, and doe yet at this day, accompt those most noble, which are most cruell, most rauenuous, most to bee dreaded, most fierce, most horrible, and most hurtfull to mankinde. As amongst birds, the Eagle, the Grifon, the Faulkon: amongst beastes of the earth, the Lion, the Dragon, the Tiger, the Leopard, the Beare, the Wolfe, the wilde Boare, the Serpent: amongst the fish of the Sea, the Whale, the Dolphin, and such like. Ancient men of that age, did beleue, the very same of trees: for the most vnfruitfull, and those that did bring least commoditie vnto man, they did not onely esteeme them moste Noble, but they did euen consecrate them vnto the Gods. As the leaued Oake to *Iupiter*, the greene Lawrell to *Apollo*, the high Cipresse, to *Pluto*, the blooming Mirhe to *Venus*, the imbracing Iuie vnto *Bacchus*, and others vnto other gods.

We see the ensignes which by antiquitie haue been attributed vnto the gods, that they doe euen shewe their crueltie, their force, and violence, forasmuch as they giue thunder to *Iupiter*: to *Mars* a Launce, a Triple forke to *Neptune*; a sharpe axe vnto *Bacchus*, to *Hercules* a clubbe, to *Saturne* a Sieth, which vse hath extended it selfe vnto noble men, because they haue chosen in their shields the most cruell and fierce beasts, which can be imagined: for this man beareth in his armes the rauenuous Eagle, that other the fierce Lyon, some one the strong Bull, another the Lion, and the Eagle together: some the fearefull Beare, others the Hinde, some Castles, others mountaines, this man a Tower, that man a Hill, some Chaines, some Fire, all being hurtfull instruments vnto man: and this onely to shewe their proud mindes, and hawtie thoughtes. By this then we may see, euen at this day, not onely how peruerse

peruerse and wicked the beginning of nobility is, but euen the life and minde of noble men.

Master *Peter Anthony* taking the speech vpon him said: Yea but I haue seene in many places the armes of noble men, which did neither denote fiercenes nor cruelty, but were only beautified with roses, violets, flowers, stars, croissants, and some of them were only distinguished by diuers colours.

True it is (quoth Master *Dominico*) but those armes ought not to be adiudged neither so ancient, nor so noble, neither do they set foorth such warlike, and worthy actions as those I spake of.

You may now see *Madam Camilla*, whether I had anie thing to say, or no, against the nobility of blood, albeit the other day, you did iudge mee to take part with *Possidonio*, and did threaten me, because I did in fauour of nobility of blood, alleadge some reasons against *Fabricio*.

Certainely (quoth shee) you are this day worthy of your hire, and in rewarde of that which you haue spoken, the penalty you did incurre the other day shall bee forgiuen you.

I shall then (quoth Master *Dominico*) liue assured, & out of all suspition, seeing that you doe absolue mee: Without passing any further, *Nennio* entring againe into his discourse, proceeded in this manner.

Albeit that rule, and tyranny ouer other, Master *Dominico*, gaue cause in those first ages (as it doeth yet at this day) that the Lord, and the tyrant, bee reuerenced of the people, and by that meanes become noble, yet wee ought not to beleue, that nobilitie is onelie growne by that meanes, for I doe finde that manie, and diuers haue beene the causes of the beginning thereof.

A TREATISE

Men being greatly multiplied vpon the earth, and nations deuided after that renuing of the worlde, their life was licentious, and lawlesse, and the greater part of them did encrease, inclining to euill, whereof murthers, violence, and robberies did growe on eue-ry side, and there was no bridle for the wickednesse of man. Whereupon all men were molested, and troubled, whether they were good, or bad: For the establishment then of some means to restraine these loose people, to the ende that good men might liue assured, and the wicked be punished according to their deserts, men did ioine togither and did choose for their Prince, amongst those that were good, the most wise, the most prudent, the most iust, and of most vnderstanding, to whom they did submit themselues, and gaue full power to punish outragious excesse, and wicked deedes, which might heere after happen, and condignlie to recompence good men.

From thence man was first called noble, (that is to saie notable in vertue aboue others.) And the most part of the men of that age, growing rude of wit, grosse of vnderstanding, without iudgement, and without any ornament of life, they who in vnderstanding, in iudgement, and in politique vertue, did surpasse others, were seperated from the ignoraunt people, and so consequently made noble: whose issue (that they might not degenerate but conserue themselues in the reputation, and nobilitie of their ancestours) did strue to followe their steps and vertue. VVhereupon they were inrolled in the register of noblemen, and from thence by succession it commeth, that nobilitie did descend to their posteritie.

It happened often that rownes were oppressed by tyrants, assieged by potentates, and the people extreame-
ly

ly oppressed: Wherefore a law was made, that who-
soever could deliuer the common wealth from so ma-
ny oppreſſions, he & his ſucceſſors ſhould be numbred
amongſt noblemen: and by this meanes, many ſhew-
ing the generoſitie and value of their courage, became
noble in this manner.

You ſee three mighty cauſes, from the which nobili-
ty did ſpring, by the which it doth clearely appeare,
that it deſcendeth from the vertues of the minde, riches
likewiſe hath beene the cauſe to make men noble.
Moreouer many in becomming tyrantes, and vio-
lently bringing others into ſubiectiō, haue made that
the originall of their nobility, as by you *M. Dominico*
hath beene ſaid. Theſe are the principall beginnings
of nobility, from hence noblemen did firſt ſpring: ſo
that the vertues of the minde, tyrannie, and riches,
were the firſt meanes and way to attaine to nobilitie.

The companie was ſo intentiue to heare, and their
memory & vnderſtanding ſo ſetled vpon *Nennio*, that
they had almoſt loſt the remembraunce of themſelues
when as ſuddainly they heard the trampling of horſes,
galloping of courſers, knocking & opening of gates,
wherefore our ſences being awaked, our backs turned,
and we looking towards the garden gates, infinitely de-
ſiring to knowe who they were, wee might ſee two of
their ſeruantcs who brought vs certaine word of other
company that were newly come, who had expreſly ta-
ken their iourney thither, to viſite vs, whereof ſome of
them were ſtraightly ioyned vnto vs by kindred, others
by friendſhip: who had brought their houndes with
them, to paſſe the reſt of the day merily with vs, in
hunting. But after they ſaw vs ſitting circlewiſe round
about *Nennio*, vnder the ſhadow of ſweete ſmelling o-
renge trees, after they had ſaluted vs, not without ſome

A TREATISE

wonder, they demaunded vvhhat the cause might bee, that we sate round about in that fashion, and what plaie we were at, but seeing nothing about vs fit for anie pastime, it maie be (quoth they) you are set to tell tales. Wherefore we hauing in as few wordes as we coulede, tolde them the successe of the matter in question, and how that the two daies before were spent in the same discourse, with a singular contentment of the whole company: They vnderstanding the matter we intreated of, did as it were enuie vs, and were not a little discontented that they had not beene there at the beginning. So they changing their former determination, and little caring for hunting, it pleased them better to staie with vs, then to withdrawe vs from our enterprise begun, and almost ended, they contenting themselves with the conclusion, and end of the question, to remedy that which they had lost in hearing the beginning, and middest thereof. Vvherfore they being set and placed amongst vs, as conueniently as they might, wee turned our lookes, our eares, and our mindes towards *Nennio*, who seeing vs set in as good order as we were before, without anie further staie added these words following vnto his former speech.

If the noble men vvhich doe liue at this daie, *Master Dominico*, doe vse such violences, such thestes, such lasciuiousnesse, and other such mischiefes, as you alleadge, they are not worthie of life: and as for mee, I will iudge them the most vile, infamous and reproachfull persons which euer liued on earth, although they did descend of most noble parentes. For the worthines of their blood is obscured and cleane defaced by their euill conditions, whereby maie bee gathered, that the worthinesse of blood (though at the first it giueth a good impression, and addeth grace to a true
and

and perfect noble man) yet is it not sufficient to make him perfectlie noble. It is then necessarie (to grace the nobilitie of blood) to adorne his life with worthie and valorous actions, and to endow himselfe with qualities fit for a gentleman.

Master Iohn Francisco saide, and what are those qualities and conditions, which doe set foorth a gentleman, and doe make him perfectly noble?

They are (quoth *Nennio*) these, to follow vertue and to flie vice.

Whereunto *Master Iohn Francisco* replied, and what are those vertues, and those vices?

Nennio answered, I esteeme it a superfluous matter to declare it vnto you, you knowing them right well, as one in whom all vertue shineth, and vice taketh no place.

But to satisfie your minde heerein, I say that the qualities and ornamentes which are requisite for the conseruation of nobility, to bring a gentleman to soueraigne perfection are many, but I wil discourse of those vnto you which seeme vnto me to bee most necessarie. A gentleman borne of noble blood ought to be intirely good, and therewithall he ought in like manner to bee wise, prudent, iust and temperate, aduised in all his actions, according as the degree of his nobilitie doeth require, he ought to be couragious and gracious, but especially of a sharpe wit, quicke iudgement, and good vnderstanding: in his discourse honest, eloquent, and modest, in as much as in any action whatsoever modestie bringeth great ornament vnto man. Let him carrie grauitie with him, which bringeth credite, and reputation amongst men. Let him yet bee respectiue, reuerent, gentle, and courteous, for by that meanes hee shall become pleasing, and amiable to

A TREATISE

all men, and the brightnesse of his nobility shall thereby shine and increase much more. Let him seeke to please others in all lawfull matters, wherein a generall good will may be gotten. Let him doe his indeuour to spread abroade a good reputation of himselfe, and to imprint a good opinion of himselfe in the mindes of men. Which hee shall easily bring to passe, if besides those matters I haue spoken of, hee doe take heede to abstaine from those things, which doe not only wholly take away, but in any thing blot or diminish his credite. Let him not be ambitious, proud, arrogant, high minded, nor discourteous, because that such kinde of behauior is wont to breed lothsomnes, hatred, euil wil, & disdain. Let him not be vaine glorious, in praising himselfe, nor too much affected in his actions. Let him auoide the euill speeches of other men. But why doe I thus reckon vp particularly that which belongeth vnto him, seeing that euery man ought of himselfe to know that which defraudeth him of honour, and renowne, & that which doth increase it.

Here *Nennio* paused a while, which Master *Peter Anthonie* perceiuing, taking the speech vpon him said thus.

I would wish *Nennio*, that thou wouldest now shew vnto vs what exercise and conuersation a gentleman hauing these partes in him, shall vse.

Nennio answered, that maie easily be gathered from those preceptes I haue giuen: for if hee bee good, his conuersation and exercise likewise shall be good.

Yea but I could wish, that thou wouldest be pleased, to discourse more particularly thereof.

Whereunto *Nennio* said. It is certaine that the value and excellency of man, proceedeth either from learning, or armes: For the name, the glorie, and the nobility

nobility likewise, of so many worthy men, and so many valiant knights, should long since haue beene extinguished, with their body, if their minde had not beene graced either with armes, or learning. To the ende then, that he that is borne of noble blood, may become excellent, and valorous amongst noble men, he ought wholly to addict himselfe thereto, & imploy his whole minde and study therein. But I will not particularlie seeke in euery point to handle the qualities fit for a gentleman noblie borne, for besides that time would not suffer me to doe it, he may supply that which wanteth in considering those meanes I haue aboue rehearsed: only I will not forbear to aduertise him of this, that in all his actions hee ought to consider the ende, and to gouerne himselfe in them with honest mediocrity, shewing his worthines with discretion, and good iudgment: and that he take good heede vnto his conuersation, for men will iudge him to be such as his conuersation is, and if hee keepe company with wicked and bad persons, he shall be reputed as they are. These are the true qualities, these are the right exercises, which he that desireth to become perfectly noble, ought to obserue, although hee bee not descended of noble blood.

But me thinketh we haue staide very long vpon these two sortes of nobilitie. Wherefore to the end I may withhold you no longer: I will passe on to the other kinde thereof. *Nennio* hauing thus spoken he paused a while, as if he would haue refreshed himselfe, and afterwards proceeded in this wise.

We haue worthy gentlemen, as I thinke, sufficiently discoursed of the force, vertue, and worthinesse of the nobility of blood, conioyned with riches: and likewise of the greatnes, and of the effectes and power of the nobilitie

A TREATISE

all men, and the brightnesse of his nobility shall thereby shine and increase much more. Let him seeke to please others in all lawfull matters, wherein a generall good will may be gotten. Let him doe his indeuour to spread abroade a good reputation of himselfe, and to imprint a good opinion of himselfe in the mindes of men. Which hee shall easily bring to passe, if besides those matters I haue spoken of, hee doe take heede to abstaine from those things, which doe not only wholly take away, but in any thing blot or diminish his credite. Let him not be ambitious, proud, arrogant, high minded, nor discourteous, because that such kinde of behavior is wont to breed lothsomnes, hatred, euil wil, & disdain. Let him not be vaine glorious, in praising himselfe, nor too much affected in his actions. Let him auoide the euill speeches of other men. But why doe I thus reckon vp particularly that which belongeth vnto him, seeing that euery man ought of himselfe to know that which defraudeth him of honour, and renowne, & that which doth increase it.

Here *Nennio* paused a while, which Master *Peter Anthonie* perceiuing, taking the speech vpon him said thus.

I would wish *Nennio*, that thou wouldest now shew vnto vs what exercise and conuersation a gentleman hauing these partes in him, shall vse.

Nennio answered, that maie easily be gathered from those preceptes I haue giuen: for if hee bee good, his conuersation and exercise likewise shall be good.

Yea but I could wish, that thou wouldest be pleased, to discourse more particularly thereof.

Whereunto *Nennio* said. It is certaine that the value and excellency of man, proceedeth either from learning, or armes: For the name, the glorie, and the nobility

nobility likewise, of so many worthy men, and so many valiant knights, should long since haue beene extinguished, with their body, if their minde had not beene graced either with armes, or learning. To the ende then, that he that is borne of noble blood, may become excellent, and valorous amongst noble men, he ought wholly to addict himselfe thereto, & imploy his whole minde and study therein. But I will not particularlie seeke in euery point to handle the qualities fit for a gentleman noblie borne, for besides that time would not suffer me to doe it, he may supply that which wanteth in considering those meanes I haue aboue rehearsed: only I will not forbear to aduertise him of this, that in all his actions hee ought to consider the ende, and to gouerne himselfe in them with honest mediocrity, shewing his worthines with discretion, and good iudgment: and that he take good heede vnto his conuersation, for men will iudge him to be such as his conuersation is, and if hee keepe company with wicked and bad persons, he shall be reputed as they are. These are the true qualities, these are the right exercises, which he that desireth to become perfectly noble, ought to obserue, although hee bee not descended of noble blood.

But me thinketh we haue staide very long vpon these two sortes of nobilitie. Wherefore to the end I may withhold you no longer: I will passe on to the other kinde thereof. *Nennio* hauing thus spoken he paused a while, as if he would haue refreshed himselfe, and afterwards proceeded in this wise.

We haue worthy gentlemen, as I thinke, sufficiently discoursed of the force, vertue, and worthinesse of the nobility of blood, conioyned with riches: and likewise of the greatnes, and of the effectes and power of the nobilitie

A TREATISE

nobilitie of the minde, and therewithall handled the originall of them both. But because there are manie who are adorned with these two sorts of nobility, from thence proceedeth that compounded or mixed nobilitie, which I did speake of in the beginning of my discourse, which is nothing else but a certaine qualitie, which proceedeth from the worthines of the blood of our ancestours, graced with good conditions and lawdable vertues issuing from the minde. He then that is possessed with this kinde of nobilitie exceedeth him far both in nobilitie and worthinesse, who is onlie noble by blood, or by vertue, as one in whom both blood and vertue doe iointlie concur together. Which I intending to perswade you, I need not alleadge any reasons vnto you beeing sufficiently manifest of it selfe, that it containeth more excellency, and glory, then both the former: Albeit that thou *Fabricio*, diddest endeuor yesterday, with no lesse pregnant, then apparāt argumēt, to shew that the contrary is true, to wit, that he is worthy of more dignity, who only is become noble of himselfe, by the nobility of the minde, then hee that was renowned both with the minde, and with blood, which is not so true, as thou diddest affirme it to bee. And as for me I would answere, that which should be fit vnto these thy argumentes were it not that Master *Peter Antho- nie* had on the suddaine plaide my part therein.

I who harkened vnto all these thinges with no lesse attention then the rest, did in the midst of this discourse, call to minde the dreame, which was the occasion that I forooke that kinde of life I led before I came to this place. In the which dreame (that I may put you in minde thereof againe) it seemed vnto mee first that I did see a company of youthfull Ladies, in the midst of whom, as their queene, did march one, richly

lie decked with golde, and precious stones. After her I saw another band of knightes followe, with their ensignes in their hand, who had with them a Lady apparelled in sanguin colour. After these followed this Lady, whose authority was so full of reuerence, who was attended on with a company no lesse learned, then wise. To cōchide, it seemed vnto me that I saw an other Ladie, so much more worthy then the rest, as the ende excelleth the middest, as by my former discourse I recited vnto you. I doe nowe consider by the qualities of this last queen (whose brightnes was such that if it were possible for me as well to see the same waking, as I did perceiue it sleeping, the light of my eies woulde surely bee dimmed) that shee did resemble no other thing, then true nobilitie, which man desiring to obtaine, to become noble, hee had neede to haue the three former meanes recited by mee, to wit, that he participate of the grace of the first queene, which I did beholde, (which was riches) and that hee doe descend of the other auncient Ladie (which did denote nobilitie of race) afterwarde it behooueth him to follow the thirde (I meane vertue) which is more necessarie then anie the other meanes: and so hauing the, without all doubt he shal easilie come vnto this last queene (which representeth nobility it selfe and the perfection thereof.) And of such necessitie is the meanes of vertue, to attaine vnto the last degree of true nobilitie, that the ancient *Romanes* did easilie belecue, they coulde not obtaine honour, (that is to saie, nobilitie) without vertue: vvhich two they did reuerence as goddesses, and builde vnto them two temples, to their praise, which were so conioyned together, that there was no man coulde enter into the temple of honour, except hee did first passe

A TREATISE

thorough the temple of vertue: to shew thereby, that no man ought to be honoured nor iudged noble, if hee obtained not this nobility by the meanes of vertue. Wherefore I come now to the conclusion of *Nennio*, who iudged according to troth, that how noble soeuer a man be, either by bloud, by riches, or by vertue only, that he becommeth farre more renowned and noble if conioyntly he inioy riches, nobilitie of bloud, and vertue.

Nennio confirming this againe, after he perceiued I had nothing else to say, he proceeded in this wise.

Certainely I will not only name him noble, but most noble, neither will I call it perfect nobilitie, but most perfect.

I do not thinke that this compounded nobility can be most perfect (quoth Master *John Francisco*) as it were opposing himself vnto *Nennio* his speech, if it do spring of the two former, one of them (to wit nobility of blood) being not perfect, according to your owne saying, but the other is; how cā it be then, that an vnperfect thing, conioyned with that which is perfect, can make that most perfect, which springeth of the coniunction of these two: surely I can scarllie be perswaded therein.

True it is answered *Nennio*, I said as much as you affirme, but yet I did not denie, but that nobility of blood was a kinde of nobilitie exalted by the vulgar sort. The nobility of bloode then, and noblenesse of the minde, when they concur together in one subiect, surely both the vulgar sort, and men of wisdom, will hold such a one to be most noble. And like as wee iudge him to be rich, who hath great store of golde and siluer, notwithstanding we will holde him to be more wealthy, if therunto you adde iewels and precious stones. The verie like happeneth vnto him, who being borne rich, and of
noble

noble blood, hath his minde fraught with good conditions, & vertues, for he ought to be adiudged most noble and his nobility most perfect.

You see then (worthy gentlemen) that noble men of whom we speake, are of three sortes, as I haue long since giuen you to vnderstand: howbeit the rest of men are not wholly to be accounted ignoble, and base. For there are some who though they bee not descended of any noble stocke, yet are they very wealthy, and those amongst their fellow citizens, in the cittie where they dwell, are had in great estimation. So it seemeth vnto me that we may well say, that men (speaking only of the qualities of such as are noble, or ignoble) in what place soeuer, ought principally to be deuided into three companies. One of the which is of those, whose estate doeth contemptibly consist in the most vile and most abiect place, who since they were first borne into the world, haue imploied all their labour and industrie to the carefull gouernement of bruit beastes deprived of reason, to the tillage of the ground, and to al other corporall labour necessary for the vse of man, whereby their life ought rather to be rearmed seruile then free. The second and meane condition, is of those that are not noble, which yet are of degree worthy of estimation & honour, in which company, are comprehended such, who though they are not of noble blood, yet at the least they do come of a honourable and honest familie, which degree & estate is of no small account and reckoning amongst men. In times past in the citie of Rome (famous and renowned more then any other place in the world) there were noble men, and others not noble, vnder which two estates not only the rule, and gouernement of the cittie did consist, but of the whole Empire, and the simple people had no lesse au-

ATREATISE

thoritie and power then the patriciens to make & publish laws, by which they were to be gouerned. And that is not only vsed in forraine citties, but euen in ours, the gouernment whereof is equallie in common with the gentlemen, and the people.

The thirde sort is of noble men, whose condition hath beene largelie entreated of these two daies: and these manner of noble men are likewise deuided into three companies, as I this day with a long discourse shewed you.

Nennio, as one desirous to come to the ende of his speech, was ready to proceed farther, when as *M. Peter Anthony* turning towards him said in this wise. Let vs a little stay here, for if my memory serue me well, besides these three sortes of nobilitie, which thou hast very well opened vnto vs, there is yet another, vnlesse I haue not well marked thy words which thou didst vtter this daie in the beginning of thy discourse, by which (besides that sort of nobility which thou didst call compounded) there is that kinde, which is called ciuile nobility: wherefore it were not amisse that with the former thou diddest likewise open this vnto vs.

Whereunto *Nennio*, without any further stay answered. I was likewise comming to the speech thereof, and let not my last words moue you at all where I saide that nobility is deuided into 3 sorts, in the which this other which seemeth a 4 is comprehended, for I do place it in the same degree with nobility of blood, and therefore it is not necessary that I adde it vnto the former as a fourth degree of nobility. It is called ciuile, as coming from thence from whence all ciuility proceedeth, to wit from kings and princes. And it is no other thing but a certain dignity giuen by the prince, which many times doth not end in the person of him to whom such honor

was

was granted, but extendeth it selfe for euer vnto his posterity, according as it pleaseth the prince. And the conformity betweene ciuile nobility, and nobility of blood is so great, that if we looke narrowly into the first beginning (in case anie certainty thereof may bee knowne) surely it appeareth it dependeth of nobility of blood. For the king hauing by his priuiledges created you and all your descendants noble by ciuile nobility, such opinion and reputation remaining of you with those of our city, who doubteth but in succession of time your posterity shal be adiudged noble of blood, and not of ciuile nobility? Surely not any man. Which may bee gathered by that which Master *Dominico* & I said before, speaking of the nobility of blood.

One of my brethren opposing himselfe vnto *Nennio* his speech, and as it were taking the wordes out of his mouth said.

I beleue that it is not yet confessed that a king, or an Emperour can make a noble man. For an Emperour, a king, or a prince may well make some courtier rich, or any other, and bestowe some office vpon him; but I doe not thinke for all that, that he can make him noble. And it is to no purpose to say, as well you maie; that in as much as hee is the Soueraigne glorie, and farre more noble then any other, that therefore he may make men honourable, and noble. For suppose that thou wert most iust, most wise, and most prudent: and that I did desire to bee made iust, wise, and prudent by thee, could that possibly be done? Truly all the whole world together, could not bring it to passe, if by nature my mind were not apt to learn such vertue: for they are gifts of the mind, and consequently not easie to be transported from one body to another. I wil then saie that a prince, albeit he be most noble, yet can he hardly make another noble.

Of

A TREATISE

Of which opinion the Emperour *Gismond* was, who being earnestly entreated by one of his loyall and faithfull courtiers, borne of base parentage, that hee would vouchsafe to make him noble: he answered, I may make thee free, and rich, but noble I cannot make thee; as being a gift not vnder his commaund, but in the power of nature.

So soone as my brother had declared his opinion; *Nennio* purposing to answer his objection, beganne to say thus.

Vnderstanding that nobility consisteth in the vertues of the minde, as you doe, it may easily be yeelded vnto, that an Emperour or a Prince cannot make another man noble: but taking it in that sort as I did giue it you, it were surely no small fault to say, that vnto him to who so large authority is graunted in this world, to establish and abrogate lawes at his pleasure, this farre lesse power shoulde bee denied. Doeth not hee create Earles, Marquesses, Dukes, & such like, who by such dignities are made most noble? Yes surely, He may then farre more easily make one noble: not that he is able to endow him with iustice, with prudence, with wisdom, & other vertues of the minde: but yet this he may do, that he shall be esteemed and reputed in the rancke of gentlemen, & be numbred amongst them. And this fauorite of the Emperour *Gismond* did seeke nothing else of him when he craued to bee made noble, then that, whereas he was not reckoned amongst noble men, nor such account made of him amongst men, & that he did not inioy the like freedoms that noble men did, that thorough his royall priuiledges, and fauour, he might haue power to take place amongst noble men, which without doubt he might haue graunted vnto him. But *Gismond* vnderstoode him not in this maner, but in this
forte

forte that you take it, and therefore his request was denied. How many doe wee see that haue beene made knightes in all kingdomes both by the Emperour and other princes of the world? Many surely. Who is there then that doth not iudge them noble sith the king will haue it so? If he grant for euer to him and to his successors such prerogatiues as noble men haue, such freedoms and markes of honour as are fit for them? Who dare account him and his successors for other then noblemen? Truely no man. Thus you may see how the prince may make an other man noble, giuing his fauor and dignity to whom it pleaseth him. The dignity of a doctor is equall vnto the degree of a knight which hee obtaineth as a reward of his vertues, & is no lesse esteemed and reuerenced then the other.

The Lady *Cassandra* seeing that *Nennio* did somewhat take breath to refresh himselfe after his long discourse, raising vp her selfe as shee leaned vpon one of her sides, and turning towardes him, shee saide in this wise.

Nennio, if I did wel vnderstand your speech you formerly concluded, that men of skil & learning are of the troupe of such as are noble by nobility of the mind, and now it seemeth that you would haue them bee in place equal to knights, which are by you put in the company of those who are noble by ciuile nobility, and ciuile nobility differeth as much from the nobility of the minde as noblenes of blood doth, by your own saying, wherefore I do not see how this may well passe without controll.

Whereunto *Nennio* presently answered, wee haue not yet spoken (*Madam*) of the dignity that learned men doe obtaine by their skill, but onely shewed that learned and vertuous men are perfectly noble. Where-
upon

A TREATISE

vpon to the end that they might euerie where be exalted and reuerenced, the princes of the world haue worthily ordained, that this dignity by the which they are called Doctors, should be added to their perfect nobility, that is to say, that by the meanes of the sciences they haue learned they may beare the lawrell, not that the same doth make them more noble or perfect: and here hence it is, that whosoever hath attained that dignity, if likewise with his science and vertue he bee adorned with good conditions, he shal not only be enobled with the nobility of the mind, but likewise with ciuile nobility, which is in the same degree that nobility of blood is, as I said vnto you. Howbeit doe not perswade your selues that euery man of skill and learning is made a perfect gentleman onlie by vertue of his science, for if he be vicious and wicked, fraught with bad conditions, although he be one of the learnedst men in the world, he shall bee helde so much the more base and ignoble. Whereupon I conclude, that these dignities of knights and Doctors, doe march in this last troupe of ciuile nobilitie.

But whether of these two dignities is most excellent and noble (quoth the Ladie *Cassandra*) that which the *Doctors* doe purchase by their learning, or knightes by armes?

Madam (quoth *Nennio*) you propounde a great question, peraduenture no lesse doubtfull then that we now discourse of, and if we haue been debating of that matter three daies, as much time at the least woulde bee required (if not more) for the well opening of this matter.

Is it so doubtfull saide shee, or doe you make vs beleeue so, to spare your labour? If that bee the cause, I doe in curtesie enioyne you before wee departe from
hence

hence to resolute herein.

Whereunto *Nennio* replied, *Madam*, It is trulie euen as I tell you, that not onlie that small time that is lefte vs of this euening, buttwo or three daies woulde scarce suffice to determine thereof: As for my selfe, I would willingly burne all these torches to night, if I might come to a resolution thereof. For nothing shoulde seeme painefull vnto me that might bring you pleasure, and contentment, and though it should, yet would I so indure it, as it shoulde seeme but a pastime vnto me.

I giue you great thanks (quoth shee) of your ready minde to doe me pleasure, as indeede to say the troth, you haue alwaies shewed no lesse in effectes, then your gracious words haue imported.

But yet let mee intreate, if so it please the rest of the company (as I doubt not but it wil) that some other day be appointed to entreate thereof: For such kind of discourses doe bring with them such delight, that for mine owne part, I could bee contented at all times to heare them.

Nennio said hereunto. If you were as carefull to command me *Madam*, as I am ready to obey you, I doubt not but in time, you woulde cease to commaund mee. Wherefore when opportunity shall serue, I will provide to set my selfe in a readines, to determine this other question which you haue propounded, as well as my ability will giue me leaue.

It were good (quoth the Lady *Laura*) to heare & see the ende of this question which you haue set a broach *Madā*, but it is not greatly material nor doth not much cōcern this our discourse: wherfore my opinion is, that before you make a final end of the cōtrouersie you haue in hād, that like as you haue shewed only what nobi-

A TREATISE

lity is amongst you men : so you would take the paines *Nennio* , to declare the nobility of women , least wee should seeme to be smally accounted of , or altogether forgotten by you. Wherefore let it not displease you, to let vs vnderstande your opinion therein, for I am certaine it will adde both grace, and ornament to your former speech.

It cannot do lesse (answered *Nennio*) then adde both grace and ornament thereto , for whatsoeuer man doth, should of it selfe haue but a bad grace, if you vwomen did not with your pleasant company , and entertainment make it more delightfull . But you shall vnderstand (*Madam*) that we haue not forgotten you as you suppose, for in this our discourse although we haue brought in no examples of women, yet doth it hold for them, and whatsoeuer hath beene spoken of vs, may be said of you, albeit not without some little difference , as in few words you shall heare.

We haue in your nobility most (honourable Ladies) to consider the selfesame three qualities , which vwee haue considered in the nobility of man, to wit, nobilitie of bloud , of the minde, and compounded nobility. The Originall of the first descendeth of the same beginning from the which the nobility of man doeth proceede ; from the father , and not from the mother ; as Master *Dominico* did very aptly declare vnto you the other day in answering the Ladie *Cassandra* , who went about to prooue that in the nobility of man, because it is deriued of blood , the mothers nobility , and not the fathers ought to be considered, and therefore I neede not anie longer to stay thereupon , becing true , and plaine of it selfe.

The second which is the nobility of the mind, ought likewise in women to bee considered in the vertues of
the

the minde: For they ought to set foorth themselves with gentle conditions, good behauiour, gracious humility, simple purenes, worthy honesty, commendable chastitie, giftes fit, and proper for Ladies, which make them to be esteemed, praised, honoured, pleasing, ful of vertue, and most noble. What grater ignobility, or basenes can be attributed vnto Ladies borne of noble blood, then contemned dishonestie, vnchaste pudicity, disloyall thoughts, wandering imaginations leading to ill customes, and finallie a life without any consideration? Not any in my iudgement.

So likewise a Ladie cannot if shee woulde seeke the whole worlde, finde any better meanes to become noble, & excellent, then the giftes aboue mentioned. And therefore we may wel conclude, that a Lady not borne of any noble blood, but beautified with good conditions, ought farre to be preferred before her, whose birth is noble, & renowned, and by her vnordinate behavior becommeth base, and infamous, because her naturall nobility is by her loosenes vtterly lost. Likewise women are ennobled by their wisdom, and learning. The knowledge of the sciences turned to the greates glorie and commendation of *Cornelia* the mother of the *Gracchi*, of *Lelia*, and *Hortensia*, the daughters of *Leilius*, and of *Q. Hortensius*, of *Proba Valeria* of Rome, and of infinite others. But weapons are not so fit for women: For albeit that *Penthesilia*, *Artemisia*, *Semiramis*, *Camilla*, *Cleopatra*, *Talasqua*, the *Amazonian* Ladies, and manie others did vse them valiantly, yet were they mighty Queenes, and puissant in armes, of whose estate and nobilitie, I intend not to speake. To proceed further, I doe altogether equall composed nobility, both of the man and woman, and therefore I need not stand any longer thereon.

A TREATISE

As concerning ciuile nobilitie, it is diuers waies purchased by women, and not as men doe attaine thereunto. For as much as any womā though she be not noble by birth, yet may she become noble, by the inseparable knot of mariage, if shee ioine her selfe in matrimony to a noble man: for diuine mariage beeing of so great vertue, doth of two bodies, make one flesh; so that shee is made noble by the nobilitie of her husband, enlightened with his beames, cloathed with his dignities, enioieth his priuiledges, receiueth with him the same preeminences, and in her are noted all such graces as her husband hath: and by the power of mariage a woman doth forsake the name of her owne family, and taketh the name of her husbands house; & shee doth not onlie take the name, but retaineth the other qualities of her husband. So that if a woman be only naturally borne, I meane that if shee bee borne illegitimate, shee becommeth legitimate if shee be ioined in mariage with a husband lawfully borne, because as I saide shee receiueth from her husband the same qualities he enioieth.

Seeing it is so (saide the Lady *Aurelia*) that a woman borne of no noble bloud, being ioyned in mariage with a gentlemā, becommeth noble, what shall we say to the contrary hereof, if a gentlewoman do mary with one of the common sort, shall he be made noble by the nobilitie of his wife?

No surely (quoth *Nennio*) but rather the nobility she had before is cleane quenched.

That is great wonder answered the Lady, & I knowe not howe that shoulde come to passe, that the woman should receiue nobility from the man, and not the husband by his wife. Surely it seemeth a very strang thing vnto me. But like as in all other things you men are wōt to keep vs silly women as low as you can, to the end you may

may preuaile in al your enterprises, euē so do you in this.

Whereunto he presently answered. You women are alwaies angry, and mistrustfull, perswading your selues, that in matters of the worlde, especially in such as doe concerne you, we do proceede as we list, hauing no regarde of you at all, but I say that you are all in generall greatly deceiued. Do not you know *Madā*, that the husband is the gouernor, the guide, & the head of his wife, & not the wife of her husband? Certainly he is; & euen as the head is the most worthy member of the body, so it is no wonder if the husband as the head, doth ennoble the wife, as his member. Now the husband being the principal captain, the wife who followeth him, is therein to follow the nature of her principal head: but this happeneth not cōtrarily, for thē the course of nature shuld be clean chāged. If thē the nature of the husband be noble, without doubt y woman, albeit she be ignoble by birth, she shall by him be made noble: if he be abiect, & base, although she be discended of noble family, she shal likewise be ignoble. And to declare this more plainely vnto you *Madā*, you cannot deny, but that the children that come of an ignoble father, though the mother be noble, shal be reputed amongst the common sort: & those that are begotten of a noble father, albeit the mother be ignoble, yet shal they by the people be held in the rācke of noble men. Likewise we see al men set vp the fathers armes, & not the mothers, in their houses, at burials, in the church, & else where. And not only this hath place in their armories, but the son taketh the name of his fathers house, & not of the mothers, which is manifest to al men. You may see then, that you haue no cause to be offended with vs, whē as your selfe may giue iudgment in this matter. And you know right wel, that the son is not to follow the honor, nor dignity, the greatnes, y cōditions, nor the nobility of the mother, but of the father

A TREATISE

Yet doe I not denie but in the birth of man, some beames of nobilitie do shine from the mother, which together with the nobility of the father, doth make it more pleasing, and delightful, not that of it selfe it is sufficient to make a mā noble, as you may haue vnderstood.

But because I haue this day farther enlarged my discourse, then my meaning was (so that we cannot longer staie thereon, because that time doth more and more force our departure from hence, and to take our recreation in some other place,) I will set apart all other reasons and doubtles of nobilitie, which might happen in our discourse, and come to the determining of the matter in question.

You haue hearde (vvorthie gentlemen) these three daies, a discourse of nobilitie, no lesse pleasing to the eares, then delightfull to the vnderstanding. Of the which in the two first daies discourse, are gathered two opinions.

The one, that true nobilitie consisteth in blood and riches, and not in vertue onely: the other, that it consisteth in the vertues of the minde, and not in blood, nor riches. And albeit that they seeme cleane contrarie, the one to the other, by that which *Possidonio*, and *Fabricio* related (vvho were rather carried vvith affection then reason, which is not to bee wondered at, seeing that they beeing guided vvith passion of minde, each of them did seeke the defence of his ovvne matter and not anie other mans:) notwithstanding I doe not iudge them cleane contrarie: for if they vv ere, one of them shoulde bee nobilitie, and the other shoulde not, vv hich I vv ould not for anie thing affirme, it beeing a matter resolved, that a great part of men (vv whereof I haue reckoned vppe a good portion) doe iudge, repute, and holde him to be no-
(for

ble, who is ingendred of noble blood, and likewise (for manie reasons before alleadged) doe take parte vvith them, although that thou vventest about yesterdaie *Fabricio* verie subtiltie to prooue that such a one was not noble: And that thou on the other side *Possidonio*, vvett verie earnest to maintaine for certaine, that vertue did not make a man excellent, and noble, and that learning was but vaine in matter of nobilitie, wherein thou wert farre deceiued: proouing moreover that riches was the foueraigne good of man; and *Fabricio* that they were occasion of all euill. Certainlie both of you did shewe, that beeing drawn vvith the passion of the minde, each of you did speake your pleasure: for indeede they are not of themselves neither good, nor euill, but a meane betweene both, and such, as by vse we doe make them: For if wee bestowe them badlie, they are surelie euill; if we spende them vvell, I see no cause vvhy they shoulde bee euill. They are not necessarie vnto true nobility, yet doe they bring some aide thereunto, in as much as there is no vertue in the world, nor any dignity, that can be gotten without these meanes, especially in this age, as of late I said vnto you.

And hee that desireth them to the intent he may bee a helpe vnto others, is not to be blamed, so that this his affection do not surpasse a certain tēpered mediocrity.

But leauing all these discourses apart, and intending (*Possidonio*, and *Fabricio*) to come to the conclusion of our speech. God knoweth whether it grieueth mee, or not, to giue sentence this daie, because I am certaine, that the pronouncing thereof cannot be, without the disquieting of the thoughtes, vexing of the heart, and griefe of minde vnto one of you.

Neuerthelesse (quoth both of them, with a willing minde)

A TREATISE

minde) speake free lie for all that: for it may bee, vvee shall depart from hence with more loue, and kindnesse, when we haue heard the determinate end of our disputation, then when we came hither; like as in wraffling, of necessitie one of vs must needes take a fall.

Whereunto *Nennio* answered: you did both of you promise mee so much, before I did receiue the charge of so heavy a burthen. But howsoeuer it fall out, that I may commit no error, I wil this day shew my selfe conformable to the opinion of the Emperour *Gismond*, who being reprehended by some of his familiar friends, because he did aduance men of base birth, yet adorned with vertue, and not such as were borne of noble bloud: He answered. As for me, I will exalt such as ought to bee preferred before any other men liuing, and those from whom true nobilitie proceedeth: which opinion because it agreeth with reason I intende to followe. Wherefore I saie, that like as it is a thing worthy greater commendation, to builde a newe pallace, to stoare it with moucables, and to inhabite it, then it is onlie to dwel therein: so is he worthy of far more greater glorie who of himselfe becommeth noble, then hee who is simplie borne noble: and for this cause therefore (and many more, no lesse pregnant, then true reasons heretofore alleadged,) I iudge, and determine this: that the nobilitie of the minde, is farre more true, and farre more perfect, then the nobility of blood conioyned with riches: and consequently thou *Possidonio*, beeing noble by birth only, and *Fabricio* by the vertues of his minde, as hath a long time beene prooued vnto you, I say that he is famous with more height and perfection of nobility, and so likewise worthy of more honour and glorie then thou art. And therefore I giue the victory of the question in cōtrouersie, together with the prize,
vnto

vnto thee *Fabricio*, as to the most noble:

Nennio hauing spoken in this wise, he helde his peace, & *Fabricio* hauing yeelded him due thanks for his iust sentence, with very good wordes, without any longer stay, with a good grace hee tooke the ring, and turning towards *Possidonio*, he spake vnto him in this manner.

I will neuer permit but that thou likewise shalt be partaker of this sentence *Possidonio*, for if it hath beene fauourable vnto me, it shal likewise in parte bee pleasing vnto thee, and therefore the Ring shal remaine with thee, which yet thou shalt not weare in remembrance of the Ladie *Virginia* who gaue it, but of me. So he extending his hand gaue him the ring, and albeit that oftentimes hee refused it, yet in the ende being constrained thereunto by the companie, hee tooke it in signe of brotherlie friendship.

Scarfe were these laste wordes ended, and the ring giuen by *Fabricio*, accepted of by *Possidonio*, but all the Ladies with a cheerefull countenance did rise vppe from their places, to shevve themselves after the fashion of women, that they were glad and wel pleased with *Fabricio*, all their voices being heard, but the Lady *Camilla* was louder then any of the rest, reioicing especiallie at his victorie, who being likewise risen, & with a quicke and speedie pace, marching towards the greene Oliue trees of the garden (for shee knewe right in what estimation the leaues thereof were, and how

Dd much

A TREATISE

much worthy of commendation he was, who was deseruedlie crowned with them) hauing broken some branches of them she suddenlie made a garland of them interlaced with flowers, such as yong maidens are wont to make: and therewithal (with her owne handes) shee crowned *Fabricio*, vsing these speeches vnto him with a womanlie voice. *Thou shalt weare it in signe of victorie.*

Wee likewise being risen from our places, and being met together in the galleries, and standing at the windowes which looked towards the garden, from whence a sweet gale of wind did blowe, wee still did discourse amongst our selues of that which had passed, & especiallie of the determining of the disputation, and of the victorie purchased by *Fabricio*: All of them equally commending no lesse the ready liberality of *Fabricio*, in bestowing the ring vpon *Possidonio*, then his good mind in accepting thereof: who albeit he had not gotten the victorie in this controuersie, yet in debating the matter with *Fabricio*, hee alleadged no weake reasons thereby to haue become conquerour.

Thus we remained there vntill supper time approached, when as the tables being couered, vnder the fresh ayre, after that we had supped with great contentment of vs all, wee passed the rest of the night in sport and pastime, vntill it was time to go to bed. And before we departed from thence, wee all with one consent gaue order, how vve should spend y next day folowing: which albeit it was passed

sed in honest and pleasaunt exercise, yet did I not determine to enter into any further discourse thereof. That which hath bin spoken this day (being the last) in reuerence of him who gouerneth al things, and who by his heauenlie will hath hitherto beene my guide, and conductor, shal at this time be sufficient.

FINIS.

